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CIVIL WAR



The Civil War

Confederacy

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EX-GOVERNOR MOREHEAD'S SPEECH.

History of the Southern Negotiations with Mr.

Lincoln and Mr. Seward,

&c. &c. &c.

[From the Liverpool Mercury, Oct. 13.]

A meeting of the members of the Southern Club was held at the Rooms, Tower Buildings, on Thursday afternoon, for the purpose of hearing an address by the Hon. Chas. S. Morehead, ex-Governor of Kentucky. There was a numerous attendance. Mr. James Spence presided.

The Hon. Mr. Morehead, who was received with applause, said—Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I hope that it will not be expected that I shall make a set speech upon this occasion, for I shall rather engage in colloquial phrase in a detail of such events as have transpired under my own observation, casually alluding to other matters in which I at least feel a deep and abiding interest. I think it not improper to say on this occasion that I was not an original secessionist. I was a Union man. I desired—and I speak now after a total and entire change of feeling on that subject, what I know to have been the sentiments of my heart—I was sincerely and honestly in favor of the perpetuation of the Union and of the constitution which our fathers gave us. I desired to see that constitution strictly observed; I desired to see its principles carried out, according to the original intention of its framers. I had been brought up from infancy with a love and veneration for and a devotion to the Union; and as I grew into manhood and looked at the magnificent country before me, embracing every variety of climate, and saw it marching forward under a constitution and a form of government which I was taught to believe was the best in the world, I felt an honest glow of pride and exultation in saying—

This is my own, my native land!

And I desired and prayed that that constitution might be perpetuated and that we might live united—one people. (Hear, hear.) When a sectional party was organized, based upon a geographical line, deeply and distinctly marked, and one great section by means of a minority of the people claimed to exclude another section from all participation whatever in their common government, and when they seized the reins of that common government and threw it into an attitude of hostility against the social institutions of an entire section, I confess that I was the most painful and trying event of my life. I struggled against hope, and endeavored to avert that which my own sound judgment told me was almost inevitable. I was in Mississippi when it seceded—my property is there; I was in Louisiana when it seceded, shortly afterwards; I was in Arkansas afterwards, in Tennessee, in one portion of North Carolina, and in Georgia. My efforts during that entire period were to arrest, if possible, the attempt to sever the Union, and to try within the constitution to obtain such guarantees as would effectually secure the rights and interests of the Southern section.

With that view, when the Legislature of Kentucky, in my absence, elected me unanimously to go as one of the delegates to the Peace Conference, I accepted the office and went to the city of Washington, hoping, as our old mother State, Virginia, had made the call, and as all the slaveholding States that then remained in the Union would send delegates, and perhaps those in the North would send delegates, that we might be able to obtain such guarantees as would avert, at least, a fratricidal war. We were in that. Every offer that was made on the part of the South was indignantly spurned by the representatives from the Northern States. Men said in that convention that they would see the Union shattered into ten thousand fragments before they would give one solitary guarantee. In that state of affairs, and knowing the course that Mr. Seward—who, it had been announced to us, was to be the Premier of the incoming administration—had pursued, I met him, and I do not deem it improper to say here, as I have said on other occasions, that he pledged his sacred honor that there should be no collision between the North and the South. (Hear, hear.) "Nay," said he, "Governor Morehead," laying his hand on my shoulder to make it more emphatic, "let me once hold the reins of power firmly in my own hands, and I don't settle this matter to the entire satisfaction of the South in sixty days I will give you my head for a football." (Hear, hear.) Although I confess that I had but little confidence in Mr. Seward, I thought it utterly impossible that an honorable man could make pledges of that kind, and so shortly afterwards via telegraph to the most shameful manner. Shortly after that Mr. Lincoln came to Washington city, in the manner that you have all read of, and his particular and intimate friend, Judge Logan, called to see me the next day, and he said to me as a secret fact and matter and unannounced to me as a secret fact and matter of his arrival in the city of Washington, speaking in a tone of indignation against those who had advised a course of that sort, and stated at the same time that Mr. Lincoln—with whom I had served in Congress, and with whom I was upon very intimate terms—mentioned my name first of all after he had met him, and desired an interview with me. I said to Judge Logan that I would prefer that other gentlemen should be with me, and not have the interview alone, and he stated that Mr. Lincoln had also named other gentlemen. The gentlemen selected as the persons to meet him were Mr. W. C. Rives, of Virginia, formerly United States Minister to France; Judge Sumner, from the same State; General Donovan, from Missouri, who distinguished himself in the Mexican war, and myself and Mr. Guthrie, who had been Secretary of the Treasury in Mr. Pierce's administration. At twelve o'clock his political friends had ascertained that he was in the city, and the room was filled, and Judge Logan came to us and informed us that we must defer the meeting until we could have it with him alone. Several days elapsed. We did meet him at about nine o'clock at night, and had a conversation of several hours' duration with him. I took occasion

shortly afterwards, as well as I could, to write down that conversation. The substance of it was about this:—

Mr. Lincoln commenced the conversation after receiving us very kindly, by stating that he was accidentally elected President of the United States; that he had never aspired to a position of that kind; that it had never entered into his head; but that from the fact of his having made a race for the Senate of the United States with Judge Douglas, in the State of Illinois, his name became prominent, and he was accidentally selected and elected afterwards as President of the United States; that running that race in a local election his speeches had been published, and that any one might examine his speeches and they would find that he had said nothing against the interests of the South. He defied them to point out any one sentence in all the various addresses that he had made in that canvass that could be tortured into enmity against the South, except, he remarked, one expression, namely, that "a house divided against itself must fall; they must either be all slave or all free States;" and he said that he explained afterwards that that was an abstract opinion, and never intended to be made the basis of his political action. He remarked at the same time that the clause in the constitution of the United States requiring fugitive slaves to be delivered up was a constitutional provision, and was a part of the organic law of the land, and that he would execute that with more fidelity than any Southern man that they could possibly find, and he could not imagine what was the cause of the deep and apparently settled enmity that existed towards him throughout the entire South, looking at me at the time as if to invite an answer from me. I replied that he was very much mistaken if he supposed that the deep pervading feeling throughout the South originated in any personal enmity towards himself; that I did not suppose that there was any feeling of that kind on the part of an individual in the South; that he was the representative of a great party—a merely sectional party—elected on a platform which they considered would, if carried out, be destructive of their dearest and best rights; and that it was on that account and that alone—the attempt to throw a common government, the government for all the States, in antagonism to the interests of a portion of the very States whose government it was—which was the cause of the deep and settled feeling which existed throughout the entire South. We appealed to him then to give the guarantees which were demanded by the Southern men in that peace conference, representing to him that it was in his power, that he was at that time a power in the State, that he held in the hollow of his hand the destiny of thirty millions of people, that if he said that the guarantees should be made and would make it, there would be no difficulty in carrying out any programme that might be adopted.

He said that he was willing to give a constitutional guarantee that slavery should not be molested in any way directly or indirectly in the States; that he was willing to

go further, and give a guarantee that it should not be molested in the District of Columbia; that he would go still further, and say that it should not be disturbed in the docks, arsenals, forts, and other places within the slaveholding States; but as for slavery in the territories, that his whole life was dedicated in opposition to its extension there; that he was elected by a party which had made that a portion of its platform, and he should consider that he was betraying that party if he ever-greed, under any state of the case, to allow slavery to be extended in the territories. We pointed out to him that there was not an acre of territory belonging to the United States where the foot of a slave could ever tread; that there were natural laws which would forbid slavery going into New Mexico, a mountainous region, and the colder regions of the North; and that it was utterly impossible that slavery could ever extend there; and we denied that a common government had power to make the prohibition, and asked him why, if he was a really true sincere Union man, have an empty prohibition when the laws of nature were a stronger prohibition than any that could be passed by act of Congress? (Hear, hear.)

That he was waived by saying that he was committed on this subject. Then it was that I replied to him—"Mr. President, you say you were accidentally selected, and elected by a party. You were the candidate of the party, but when you were elected, sir, I thought—I have been taught to believe—that you were the President of the Union. I opposed you, sir," I said to him, "with all the zeal and energy of which I was master. I endeavored to prevent your election, not because I had any personal feelings of enmity towards you, but because I believed that it would lead to the very result you witnessed. I opposed you, sir, but you are now President; you have been elected according to the forms of the constitution, and you are the President of the people of the United States, and I think that some little deference is due to the opinions of those who constitute the majority, according to the vote that had been polled, of 1,100,000 men in the United States."

He at once rather briskly said, "If he was a minority President he was not the first, and that at all events he had obtained more votes than we could muster for any other man." I think, as near as I can recollect, those are about his identical words.

I responded at once to him that I did not intend to recall to him that he was a minority President, but simply to announce the broad fact that he was the President, not of the men who voted for him, but of the whole people of the United States, and that of the wishes and feelings and interests of the whole people of the United States—the party with 1,100,000 majority as well as the minority party by whom he was elected, ought to be consulted by him.

General Donovan here interposed and presented three alternative propositions to him. First, that he might remain perfectly idle and passive and let the disintegration of the States go on as it had gone on; secondly, give guarantees such as we asked and bring the whole power of the administration to bear in obtaining those guarantees;

or, thirdly, resort to coercion and compel the States to acceding States to obedience. He illustrated very distinctly and clearly those three propositions.

When the conversation had staid a little, I ventured to appeal to him, in a manner in which I never appealed to any other man and never expect to do again. I said that as to the last proposition I desired to say one word—that I trusted and prayed to God that he would not resort to coercion; that if he did, the history of his administration would be written in blood, and all the waters of the Atlantic Ocean could never wash it from his hands. (Hear, hear, and applause.) He asked me what I would do, and if I meant by coercion the collecting of the revenue and the taking back of the forts which he said belonged to the United States. I replied that that was the only mode in which it was possible that he could under the constitution resort to coercion—by an attempt to collect the revenue and to take back the forts. He had placed himself in a chair with rounds to it, with his feet upon the highest round—a long, lanky man, with very large side whiskers, with his elbows upon his knees, and his hands upon the sides of his face, in an attitude of listening, and when he would speak he would drop his hands and raise his head. Dropping his hands and raising his head, he said he would do the first cause to the bar. An old man, he said, had applied to him to bring a suit, and made out a capital case, as he thought, but when the evidence was detailed before the jury it was the worst case that he had ever listened to, and while the evidence was going on the old man came listening to the evidence himself, and whispered in his ear, "Give it up." (Laughter.) Now," said he, "Governor, wouldn't this be 'give it up'?"

I assured you, Mr. Chairman, I don't present it in any light different from that in which it actually occurred—some whatever. I said to him, "Mr. President, it may be said that it would be 'give it up' it up, but wouldn't you better say it if it would be bloodshed than dredge this had with blood, and then have to 'give it up'?" (Applause.) He then asked what he was to do with his oath of office. He said he had sworn to see the laws faithfully executed, and, addressing himself to me, he said, "I would like to know from you what I am to do with my oath of office." I said to him that he had taken a solemn oath to see the laws faithfully executed; but that Congress was then in session, and application had been made to Congress to give to the President of the United States the power to collect the revenue by armed vessels outside of the ports and Congress had refused to give that power. "If," I said, "Congress fails to give the necessary power, Mr. President, to you to collect the revenue by vessels outside the ports, how are you to collect it? Do you think that you can send a collector to the port of Charleston, to the port of Savannah or of New Orleans to collect the revenue there? Is it not an impossibility, and does your oath bind you to do a thing that is impossible? As to the forts, that is a matter within your discretion, sir. You can withdraw the troops if you please. You are the commander-in-chief, and it belongs to you either to keep them there or to withdraw them totally, and prevent a collision, and a consequent deadly and ruinous war." "Well," said he, rousing himself again, "I will only answer you by telling you a little anecdote which struck me as you were going on. It is from Esop's fables, and, doubtless, in your schoolboy days you have read it. Esop, you know," says he, "illustrates great principles often by making mute animals speak and act, and according to him there was a lion once that was desperately in love with a beautiful lady, and he courted the lady, and the lady became enamored of him and agreed to marry him, and the old people were asked for their consent. They were afraid of the power of the lion, with his long and sharp claws and his tusks, and they said to him, 'We can have no objection to so respectable a personage as you, but our daughter is frail and delicate, and we hope that you will submit to have your claws cut off and your tusks drawn, because they might do very serious injury to her.' The lion submitted, being very much in love. His claws were cut off and his tusks drawn, and they took clubs then and knocked him on the head." (Laughter.)

I replied, I think, about in substance this—that it was an exceedingly interesting anecdote, and very apropos, but not altogether a satisfactory answer to me, and then said to him, "Mr. Lincoln, this to me, sir, is the most serious and all-absorbing subject that has ever engaged my attention as a public man. I deprecate and look with horror upon a fratricidal war. I look to the injury that it is to do, not only to my own section—but I know it is to be desolated and drenched in blood—but I look to the injury that it is to do to the cause of humanity itself, and I appeal to you, apart from those interests, to lend us your aid and countenance in averting a calamity like that."

Before he replied Mr. Rives of Virginia got up. We had before that conveyed sitting in a semi circle round the President; but Mr. Rives rose from his chair, and, with a dignity and eloquence that I have seldom heard surpassed in the course of my life, he appealed to him. I could not pretend to give even the substance of his speech, but I remember that he told him that he was then a very old man; that there never had been a throb of his heart that was not in favor of the perpetuation of the Union; that he came there with a hope and a wish to perpetuate it, and that all his efforts had been exerted in endeavoring to procure such guarantees as would perpetuate it; but that he desired to say to him—and he said it with a trembling voice—in order that he might know, and not say thereafter that he was not fully warned, that he agreed with every word I had said with regard to the horrors of this anticipated war, and that if he did resort to coercion, Virginia would leave the Union and join the seceding States. "Nay, sir," he said, "old as I am, and dearly as I have loved this Union, in that event I go, with all my heart and soul." (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Lincoln jumped up from his chair, as Mr. Rives was standing, advanced one step towards him, and said, "Mr. Rives, Mr. Rives, if Virginia will stay in, I will withdraw the troops from Fort Sumter."

Mr. Rives stopped back and said, "Mr. President, I have no authority to speak for Virginia. I am one of the humblest of her sons; but if you do that it will be one of the wisest things you have ever done. Do that, and give us guarantees, and I can only promise you that whatever

...and to restore it to what it was." We then all went out and were standing. I was on the outer circle.

He said, "Well, gentlemen, I have been wondering very much whether, if Mr. Douglas or Mr. Bell had been elected President, you would have dared to talk to him as freely as you have to me." I did not exactly hear the answer, but I am told that Mr. Guthrie answered him about in this way. "Mr. President, if General Washington occupied the seat that you will soon fill, and it had been necessary to talk to him as we have to you to save such a Union as this, I for one should talk to him as we have to you." (Hear, hear.) That closed the conversation.

I was led to believe from this that Mr. Lincoln would pursue a conservative course, but would not attempt to make war to bring back the States which had seceded, and that we might get along peacefully without bloodshed. But I was soon undeceived. With a duplicity—I dislike to say it of one holding that high station; I dislike to say it of one with whom I have been on terms of strict social intimacy, but I do say it, and I am compelled by facts to say it—with a duplicity unparalleled, as far as my reading of history extends, he entered upon the duties of his office with a declaration that if there was a collision it should not be his fault, at the very time that he was preparing an armament in New York to reinforce Fort Sumter. (Hear, hear.) You have read, most of you, the correspondence between the Commissioners sent by the Confederate States which had seceded to Mr. Seward, and the double-faced policy that was pursued there, as detailed by Judge Campbell, one of the most estimable and truthful men to be found anywhere in the world—a man strictly reliable. From that it appears that at the very time they were preparing that armament to go down and provoke a collision, in order that they might say that the Confederates had made the first attack and fired the first gun, they were holding out constantly the idea that they would settle and acquiesce in the division that had then taken place. They did go down there. They sent that armament down, and the day before that armament had arrived, according to the promise which was made, that notification was given to Gov. Pickens, of South Carolina. Even then, even at that period when they had violated all those laws of courtesy which ought to have characterized a transaction of this kind, when they had acted with this duplicity, the commander of Fort Sumter was officially told, "We will not fire on this fort unless you fire first. If you will agree not to fire until we fire, there shall be no attack made upon the fort at all." This is ascertained from official documents that any one may have access to. This was refused; and the Confederates were left in this position—that they had either to fire before the naval armament came up, or wait until it came up, and receive the double fire from the fort and from the armament. They chose to fire first in self-defense, and took the fort before the armament came there. (Hear, hear.) Then it was that the cry burst forth in the North, the rabid cry, "To arms, the flag had been insulted," and timid men succumbed to the hurri-

caus; and it seemed to be the unanimous feeling throughout the North that the South had brought on this war, had fired the first gun, and had provoked the collision, and that they must "wipe out"—to use the language of one of their orators—"crush out this rebellion." From that moment the constitution of the United States was annihilated, and every guarantee of liberty trampled under foot—every one. You cannot find one single guarantee of personal liberty contained in that instrument that I once looked upon as so sacred that has not been ruthlessly violated on the part of this administration. No man, according to that constitution, is to be taken up excepting upon a warrant. Now they take them up on telegraphic edicts; the lightning becomes the speedy messenger of oppression, and in the single State of Kentucky more than two thousand five hundred persons have been arrested and thrown into prison without a charge against them, and without the possibility of being heard. (Cries of "Shame.") In the State of Maryland they seized upon the Legislature. Every man who was supposed to have a feeling—that natural feeling which ought to reside in the bosom of every human being—for his own section, and kindred and blood, every man, without having committed any offence whatever, was seized and incarcerated in the most healthful prison ever human being was placed in. In the State of Missouri, going still further, men had been taken out and deliberately shot in the presence of their families for sympathizing with the South. An intimate and dear friend of mine, who lived in Louisville, and owned a large property there, who was a member of the Legislature and a candidate for Congress—William H. Field—was taken out and shot in the presence of his family, in his own yard, for daunting, which was true, that he knew anything of a guerilla band which was in the neighborhood; and the man who did it have never been called to account, have never been tried or censured by the President of the United States. The other day a soldier goes from Lexington to the little town of Paris, eighteen miles off, and boldly said he would kill a secessionist that day. Some one, supposing he was a little intoxicated, and talking without intending to carry into effect what he said, told him there was one then lying in the guard house. A drunken man was lying upon the straw in that guard-house, and this soldier went and placed his pistol through the bars, and deliberately shot him dead. He has never been called to account for it so far as I have ever heard. One of the best men ever I knew, the owner of a large plantation in the South—Abraham Spiers, of Paris—was deliberately shot down, and the soldier who did it demanded that every Union man in the little town of Paris should treat him for having performed so meritorious an act. These are things that are going on unrebuked. Need I tell you of Turin? You have heard of that. It is too horrible to detail. He proclaimed to his brutal hired assassins that he would shut his eyes for two hours and they might do what they pleased; and by those who were there at the time I have been informed that you could not look down the streets of the little town of Paris in Alabama in any direction without seeing

men running, some with their clothes half torn, and brutal soldiers following them. As to Butler, the decree of infamy has been pronounced against him by the civilized world. He has achieved an immortality of infamy. No man who has a sister, wife, or some person near and dear to him of the female sex can think of the hideous depth of the enormity that ought to be attached to that proclamation. It is not that it has been actually carried out, but it is the disgrace that he has attempted to heap upon the whole female population there. Yet we find that a lady (smiling as a federal corpse was carried by, is hapless) imprisoned indefinitely, carried and placed with soldiers upon a desert island. And when the pen of an impartial historian shall record the trial, the mock trial of the man Mumford who was hung, all future ages must and will pronounce it actual, deliberate and unexecuted murder. Allow me for a single moment—it will take but a moment to do it—to give you the actual facts of that case. On the 25th of April, at half past one o'clock, Commodore Farragut sent Captain Bailey with a small squad of soldiers to demand of Monroe the surrender of the city of New Orleans. Monroe replied that it was under the command of General Lovell, and it was not for him to surrender it or to negotiate the matter. Lovell was sent for. He replied that he would not surrender, but that he could not hold the city, and intended to evacuate it, and after his evacuation the civil authorities might do what they pleased. He did evacuate it. The next morning, which was Saturday, the 26th of April, they sent in a squad of soldiers, demanding the surrender of Monroe to surrender the city and to take down the Stars and Stripes flag which was upon the Common Council Chamber. However, in coming in early in the morning, they hoisted a flag upon the Mint. Immediately five or six thousand of the citizens of New Orleans collected round the hoisted flag, and the federal flag should be hoisted before the city had surrendered. Five men volunteered to take it down. Among them was Mumford. He did not take it down, but he was one of the five who volunteered to do it. It was taken down by another man, and in the act of taking it down that man was fired upon, and vessels in the river. It was taken down, however, and after that Monroe answered that the city was at Commodore Farragut's command. He could take it if it was undefended; but there was not one hand in the city of New Orleans that would ever take down the Stars and Stripes flag; he could take it down himself, but no one in New Orleans would take it down. The correspondence was kept up until Tuesday, the 29th of April, before the city was actually surrendered. It was taken possession of on Tuesday morning, the 29th, Farragut agreeing finally to take the flag down himself, and the federal flag was raised on the 29th. For the taking down of the federal flag on the 26th—the surrender of the city on the 29th—General Butler, who after that came into the city, had Mumford arrested, tried by a mock court martial, and hung. It was murder in the very first degree. (Hear, hear.) I name these things to show the horrors of this war; and as I don't feel, and I hope you will not feel that I am making you a speech, but that I am talking to you, I wish to present to you an illustration of the truth of the remark I make, that after firing upon Fort Sumter those who had waged a lifetime warfare upon the Union, who had appeared in every way possible, became pariahs of the Union men of the North. Mr. Seward himself, as I said, declared in a speech that he made as early as 1848 that the Union could be preserved by consent; that it was preposterous to think of maintaining it in any other way. I have his speech here. But in 1860 he was in the Senate of the United States, and on the 1st of February of that year Mr. John P. Hale, who is very well known as an abolitionist, there introduced eight petitions from those men that are now such pure and noble fighting and drenching the entire land in blood in order to produce brotherly affection—eight petitions to dissolve the Union peacefully; and on the 7th of that month he offered one which gave rise to debate. This is the resolution:—"That the federal constitution, in giving its support to slavery, violates the Divine law and makes war upon human rights, and is inconsistent with republican principles; that the attempt to unite slavery and freedom in one body politic has already brought on the country great and manifold evils, and has fully proved that no such Union can exist but by the sacrifice of freedom to slavery. They therefore respectfully ask Congress to propose without delay one plan for the immediate and peaceful dissolution of the American Union." For the resolution there were three yeas—Hale, the present Secretary of the Treasury, Hale and Seward—noes, 51. In the course of the debate, as a part of his argument, Mr. Webster, from Massachusetts, said that he thought that it was excessively proper that the gentlemen who were in favor of the resolution should append to it a preamble in these words:—"Gentlemen members of Congress, who, as the commencement of this session you each of you took your solemn oaths in the presence of God and on the holy Evangelists that you would support the constitution of the United States; now, therefore, we pray you to take immediate steps to break up the Union and overthrow the constitution of the United States as soon as you can. And as it is duty bound will over pray." He deemed that the best argument which he could make against the resolution that these Union men who are now desolating our land in order to bring us back under their control and domination—these par excellence Union men, Seward and Chase, voted for. I am afraid that I am detaining you too long. (Cries of "Go on.") Many persons have said that the South had no cause of complaint, that there was no reason whatever for the action they took, and that although they may now be united, they were wrong in the first instance. Whilst I was a Union man I never for a single instant felt that they were not laboring under grievances of the most serious character. I desired to have guards against their repetition in any way whatever, but I wanted to preserve the Union with these guards. In the election of Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Seward made a trip over a large portion of the country, and made various speeches. I kept a note book at the time, and have taken down little extracts from portions of these speeches, and I desire to read you one to show what feelings the South would naturally have after a declaration from a man so prominent as he was, and after it was announced that he was to be Premier of the new administration.—"What," said he, "do we keep up an army and navy for? The sea is not a nation on earth that dare attack any one of the free States if they were all separated and disunited from the Union. Not one. There is no such thing as danger, and yet we are keeping

up an army and navy—for what? In order that slaves may not escape from the slave State into the free, and that the freed and emancipated negroes in the free States may not enter and introduce civil war into the slave States; and because that if we provoke a foreign war the Southern frontier is exposed to invasion from England, France and Spain. That is the whole object of our army and navy. Have I not, then, a right to say that I would rather have no army and no navy; that I would rather not wring from the freemen of the United States money to sustain the army and navy, which in their very influences corrupt public virtue? Certainly, that is my duty as a patriot." We care nothing for the abstract opinion, but when he gives a reason for that opinion showing the deep malignity of feeling he entertains towards the South, we have a right to complain of it. He says that he would destroy the army because he desired that invasions might be made like those of John Brown upon the slave States, and all the horrors of a servile war brought on, which calamity the army might, by possibility, avert. The Southern frontier was defenceless; but the whole Northern frontier was bristling with forts, and they could defend themselves—they had wrung the money from the South by enormous tariffs—and now they would have no navy, they would abolish it because that navy, in case of a foreign war, could only be used for the protection of the South. If the North having by means of the South been enabled to protect its own citizens would leave the South to shift for itself, would it not be better that they should be a separate and distinct nation, in order that they might protect themselves, as they could not by this theory be protected by a common government? In the same speech he says he begs his followers to let no differences among themselves or any other cause divide them, and one single administration would settle this question finally and for ever. He goes on further and tells them in another speech, which he made at Madison, in Wisconsin, that wherever any human being within the broad limits of the United States chose to rise up, or any class of human beings, to assert their liberty, he would bid them God speed. Well, we had slaves. I know how Englishmen feel about that. I am well aware of it. I know how all people who have not slaves themselves feel in relation to the subject of slavery; but allow me to say a word or two on the subject. We have got them. We did not make them slaves. Virginia passed twenty odd different acts of her Legislature during her colonial existence against the slave trade. They were all vetoed by our mother country—those from whom we are descended. Englishmen, the English government put those slaves upon us. They are there. They have multiplied by kind treatment until they have reached a little over 4,000,000. And now suppose that England had not abolished slavery in the West Indian islands, and that we had no slaves, and that

America should interpose and use threatening language and say, "We will use not the moral power which we have to persuade you to emancipate these slaves, but we will force you to do it," would not there be a revulsion of feeling? Undoubtedly there would. If I know anything of English character, if I know what John Bull is, he would not brook any interference on the part of foreign countries in a matter of domestic policy that belonged solely and exclusively to him. (Hear, hear.) It would be his business, and his alone. And so it is with regard to the States. It has been shown by the excellent gentleman who presides on this occasion in a manner so clearly that I venture the assertion that no human being who will ever read his book can answer it. It seems to me that no fair man can ever doubt the power of the States in the regulation of their domestic concerns. That they are independent as to matters of that kind has been admitted by every American statesman, whether abolitionist or not. From the day of making the constitution up to the present moment it has been admitted, even by those men who have battled for a dissolution of the Union, that the constitution gives to the States themselves the sole and exclusive control over this matter of slavery. Well, if England would spurn every foreign interference, it is the same thing with us. We are Englishmen; we are descendants of Englishmen; we are bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, and we possess the feelings in common which you have, and when the States, which had no control, no power, no right whatever to interfere in the domestic institutions of the South, attempted to do so, there was a feeling of indignation and defiance of any interference of that kind. The feeling of the entire South was that it was not for them to interfere at all. And with all that, after the North had raised seven hundred thousand men, and invaded and attempted to despoil the South; after all their acts of atrocity, unparalleled, I venture to assert, when they were all collated and brought into one mass—unparalleled in the annals of civilization; after they had done that, and had been driven back from the soil that they had invaded—driven out entirely, the last trump card is to be played. The constitution has been heretofore trampled under foot; there has been no government at all; the habeas corpus act has been disregarded; citizens have been imprisoned overywhere; freedom of the press is gone; freedom of speech destroyed; the right of search exercised, regardless of the guarantee of the constitution. All this, and that, just to cap the climax of the whole, Mr. Lincoln comes forward—as if he had the sole and exclusive power, as if he were the autocrat of America, as if he did not derive his power from the constitution, as if he were not a constitutional President, deriving every power he can possibly exercise from an express grant, everything he does in violation of the constitution being declared by the terms of the constitution to be null and void—he comes forward and says he will set the slaves free. He will do it! Why, if it were not so serious a matter, it would be a subject almost of mirth. A Doctor Cowell, I believe, wrote a book called "The Inter-preter," in order to defend the princely prerogative of James I. of England, in which he declared that the king was *solutus a legibus*, not bound in any way by the laws; and King James himself, if I remember aright, in his celebrated lecture to the twelve judges, told them that they must remember that he had a double prerogative, that he was invested with a prerogative which was a subject of dispute every day in Westminster Hall, and which they might talk and dispute about, but that there was another prerogative, a princely and imperial prerogative, said he, as to matters of State, which no man has a right to talk about at all. And Mr. Lincoln seems to be

following in the footsteps of James when he says that he has in effect a double prerogative—a prerogative vested in him by the constitution and another resting in that "higher law doctrine" by which he is allowed to do whatever he pleases to protect and preserve the State. Under this sort of prerogative he issues this proclamation. In that proclamation there is a covert invitation to servile war. All the horrors and atrocities of St. Domingo he desires to see re-enacted in the Southern States. You will remember, those of you who have paid attention to his career, that in the last message that he delivered to Congress and to the people of the United States that he was satisfied that there was a majority of Union men in every State, that had seceded, except in South Carolina alone. He either believed it or he did not. If it is his opinion that there is a majority of Union men in all these States, and that they have been kept down by terrorism in the South, according to the slang language of the Northern patriots and Union men; if that is the case, how horrible, how more than horrible, would be the deed which he invites these poor wretched people to engage in. Certain destruction, inevitable, speedy and absolute destruction to the poor slave, beyond any question. And where they gain a temporary success is there a man who can imagine his sister, his mother, his daughter kneeling and begging and imploring a slave, with the infuriated passions aroused by these bad men, murdering indiscriminately men, women and children, murdering those whom Mr. Lincoln says are his friends. And yet, after inviting the slave to murder those whom he says are his friends, and are at heart for the Union, he carefully tells them in the same document that those who are for the Union in the same States shall be compensated for their slaves. He invites the slaves to commit indiscriminate massacre, and then tells the men whom he has consigned to such punishment as that, "If you show that you were for the Union you shall be paid for the slaves thus set free." But if he has changed his opinion, and has come now to the conclusion that there is no Union sentiment in the South, as is really the fact, there is not one human being throughout the entire Confederate States—so help me God! not one, I believe, unless it is a stray Yankee who has got down there and can't get away—that has not resolved in his heart of hearts that the last drop of blood shall be shed before they will ever submit to the cruelty and tyranny of the North again. (Loud applause.) If, then, he comes to that conclusion—that there is a united sentiment throughout the South, what does he say through Mr. Seward, in that despatch of the 10th of April—that that government which attempts to coerce thoroughly disaffected States and bring them back to this Union is a despotism. He may take either alternative. If he comes to the latter conclusion, then he admits that he is aiming the despot in attempting to coerce the Southern States in a way contrary to the international code of the whole civilized world. (Hear, hear.) He claims this power in one of two ways—either under the constitution of the United States or as an exercise of the war power. Well, he would hardly claim it under the constitution of the United States. Will you allow me—it is a very short extract—to read what Mr. Webster said on the subject. He was making a speech at Richmond, Virginia, and he said—"I hold that Congress is a direct or indirect, with this as with any other institutions of the States." (Cheering, and a voice from the crowd exclaimed—"We wish this could be heard in Maryland to Louisiana, and we desire that the sentiment expressed may be repeated.") "Repeat, repeat." "We! I repeat it, proclaim it on the wings of all the winds, tell it to all your friends—(cries of "we will, we will!")—tell it, I say, that, standing here in the capitol of Virginia, beneath an October sun, in the midst of this assemblage, before the entire country, and upon all the responsibility which belongs to me, I say that there is no power direct or indirect, in Congress or the general government, to interfere in the slightest degree with the institutions of the South." That is the constitution; that is the government under which we live; that is the government that I wanted to perpetuate, that I desired to see continued, united, upon that basis, according to these terms, according to the true meaning of the constitution, which was the bond of union between us. Well, under the constitution, then, he has no power. Then let us look at it as a war power. You will remember that in 1812 there was unfortunately a war between Great Britain and the United States. That war continued for nearly three years. At the close of the war a treaty was made at Ghent, Mr. John Quincy Adams, father of the present accomplished Minister from the United States to the Court of this country, was one of the negotiators on the part of the United States with Mr. Henry Clay, Mr. Bayard and others—five of them. By that treaty Great Britain stipulated to deliver up whatever private property had been taken. The question then came up whether the slaves that had been taken by Great Britain should be delivered up under that treaty. It was resisted. There was a difference of opinion between Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Adams, the Minister then at the Court of St. James, and they agreed to refer it to the Emperor of Russia. I am not now arguing whether it is right or wrong, but I want to show what has been the settled policy of the United States. Mr. Adams writes that he had an interview with Lord Liverpool, in which he presented to him the argument that slaves were private property and not subject to be taken; and that Lord Liverpool did not object to the argument. When it was referred to the Emperor of Russia, he writes to Mr. Middleton, who was our Minister at Russia, to the effect that private property was not subject to capture and could not be lawfully taken with the place. "With the exception," he says, "of maritime captures, private property in captured places is, by the laws of nations, always respected. None can lawfully be taken." I will not read the whole of it, but just mention the principle in the conclusion of his letter. "The principle is, that the emancipation of an enemy's slaves is not among the acts of legitimate war. As relates to the owners, it is a destruction of private property nowhere warranted by the usages of war." That is the doctrine of the United States. That doctrine was sanctioned by

down by Mr. Adams. So that I show you Mr. Webster, and I could show you five hundred other Northern men who have admitted the same thing, that there is no power under the constitution, and no war power, and that the act of Mr. Lincoln is in violation of the law of war, as expounded by the civilized world. Maryland is a part of the United States; Delaware is a part; Kentucky has never yet seceded; Missouri is a part. All these States have slaves, and Mr. Lincoln, in his proclamation, proposes that if they will send members of Congress to the National Legislature slavery shall remain there—that he will not abolish it there. It is not, therefore, because he is opposed to slavery that he would abolish it; it is as a punishment to individuals. Well, so far as regards that, there is another great principle recognized by all courts of justice—that wherever a country is taken possession of by an enemy, the allegiance of the common people of that country is absolved for the time being wherever protection is not extended. The United States has decided it in six different cases. Castine was taken in 1812. We had laws against the importation of foreign goods, and especially from Great Britain; but the citizens of that place, after it was taken, traded with this country, and introduced a large amount of goods, and at the close of the war they were brought before the courts of the United States for violating the non-intercourse laws. The judges unanimously decided that as the goods were imported at the time that the United States laws could not be enforced there, the place being in possession of the British government and the British troops, allegiance and protection were correlative terms, and that these individuals who had imported goods during that period were in no manner liable for a violation of the laws of the States. The same thing has been declared here by statute 11, Henry VII. After the long wars of the Roses they felt it necessary to embody what was a common law principle in a statute which provides that you may obey the ruling monarch whether he is the rightful monarch or not, and in so doing you are not liable for a violation of the laws of the realm at all. Yet the federalists attempt to confiscate the whole of the private property, not slaves only, but all the private property of those citizens who are bound to obey the law of the confederacy under which they live, receiving no protection from the United States. They confiscate their property, and declare their slaves free. Such an act of despotism is not to be found on the record of any civilized nation or the world. (Hear, hear.) There are many other things,

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my friends, that I might say to you, but I deem it unnecessary. I have already talked more than perhaps ought—(cries of "No, no.")—but my heart is deeply enlisted in this thing. I have in my own person felt the despotism of this Northern government. It is a matter of very little moment to the world or to you, or even to the community in which I live, how a single individual may suffer from despotism; but the management of the rights of one individual is but the sanction for a like atrocity to be perpetrated upon every human being that comes under the influence of such a government as that. I was seized at two o'clock in the night, in my own bed, dragged from it and from my family, without a moment's warning, and carried across the Ohio river, in defiance of the writ of habeas corpus. The soldiers took me and ran me by night, by special train, to Indianapolis. One of the judges of the supreme court sent a marshal with a habeas corpus to bring me back, but I was carried by special train to Columbus, Ohio. There I was kept awhile, and afterwards I was carried on to New York, and hurried to the prison of Lafayette. And here I desire to say that I cannot well conceive of any horror more dreadful than that which was experienced in that prison. It has a small court not much larger than this room for exercise. Thirty-eight of us were placed in one room, five thirty-two pound cannons occupying one portion of the room, which was sixty-six feet in length and twenty-two feet in depth. The floor was a brick floor, so damp that your boots would be covered with green mould every morning. They gave me fourteen pounds of straw to sleep on, carelessly weighed, about half rotten. It was placed in a very coarse tick. I am, without any shoes, six feet in height, and the bed measured four feet seven inches—actually measured by a member from Maryland, Mr. Saugston. We had one very dirty tin cup to drink out of, and the water we drank was filled, not with animalcules, but with millions of tadpoles. We had to hold our noses when we drank, and strain every drop of it. We were locked up at six o'clock at night, and kept till six next morning without any natural convenience whatever, suffering the agonies of death. I remember, if you will allow me to tell it—I dislike to follow Mr. Lincoln—but there was an old man brought from Kentucky upwards of seventy years of age. His head was as white as snow. I never saw him before, but I was amazed to see him; and seeing that he was from Kentucky I went up and addressed him. A friend had sent me some liquors, and I asked him if he would not like to have a little whiskey or brandy, and he said yes. It was the only time in his life that he felt that a good dram would be of service to him. So, as is very commonly the case there, he took the bottle and poured out a very heavy drink. (Laughter.) He drank it off without mixing it with water, and he took up a glass of water—we had purchased glasses at that time—to drink after it, and saw the tadpoles. He set it down again, shaking his head, and said he could not stand it, and walked away; but the brandy burned him so much that he came back and took it up, and held it between the light of the sun and himself, and soliloquizing said, "Well tadpoles, if you can stand it I can," and drank it off. (Laughter.) He made a compromise with the tadpoles. We wrote a letter to Mr. Lincoln, signed by every individual who was in the fort, telling him of the horrors of this prison, stating that we did not pretend to discuss the rightfulness of our imprisonment, but that we supposed we were entitled to the common rights of human beings. The result of that was that in about a month we were taken to Fort Warren. They put us on a vessel to be taken thither by sea. The captain told me himself that the vessel was calogated to take about two hundred and fifty persons, and they took eleven hundred. We were fifty hours in making the voyage, and all that was given to us to eat during that time was a piece of raw fat barrel pork, perfectly raw, about the size of my hand, and three sea crackers, and I saw the poor soldiers eating that raw meat. We had furnished ourselves with something better, but we could not feed them all with the little we had. We were placed afterwards in Fort Warren upon the naked floor, without bed or blanket, or anything—not a wisp of straw even, and there in that condition we had to remain until we supplied ourselves with such things as we needed, buying beds and headsteds, and being allowed by a very kind, excellent and humane officer, Colonel Dymick—who, I believe, is a thorough gentleman, and who did all he could to alleviate our condition—being allowed by him to employ a cook and to buy provisions, we lived very comfortably there. This gentleman, in my experience, I trust that the time is not far distant when these things are to cease. (Hear, hear.) I think that the South has shown that she intends, under all circumstances and in every contingency, to maintain her independence. (Loud cheers.) It is not for me, it is not for an American, it is not for a citizen of the Confederate States, to ask England to recognize us; but it seems to me that there is coming up a solemn appeal to the bosom of humanity, as well as of justice; that the time has come when we ought to be recognized among the nations of the earth. I do not ask for such recognition. I have no official position—I am a mere wanderer and an exile. It is for every nation to determine for herself. It is for the people of England to decide—it is for the government of England to decide, without any interference whatever on our part. We perhaps are not good judges. We feel that we are not; but we think that enough has been shown to the world to convince them that we intend, that we can, and that we will be independent. (Cheers.) The Governor concluded by thanking the gentlemen present for the attention with which they had listened to him, and resumed his seat amidst loud cheering. Rising again, he said he was reminded by a gentleman that an order came to Fort Warren whilst they were there forbidding them to employ counsel, it being stated by Secretary Seward himself that the mere fact of employing counsel would be a sufficient cause for continuing them in prison. A vote of thanks to Mr. Governor Morehead having been moved and seconded, the motion was carried by acclamation, and the meeting separated.

ANOTHER SPEECH BY ALEX. STEPHENS

He Finds Nothing Discouraging in the Present Condition of Affairs.

From the Richmond Dispatch, July 23.

Vice-President STEPHENS, who is on his way to the South, stopped at Charlotte, N. C., on Friday night, and was serenaded by a large number of citizens. In reply he made them a speech about an hour in length. He commenced by alluding to the invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania by Gen. Lee's army; said that it had whipped the enemy on their own soil and obtained vast supplies for our own men, and was now ready to again meet the enemy on a new field. Whatever might be the movements and objects of Gen. Lee, he had entire confidence in his ability to accomplish what he undertook, for in ability and intellect he was a head and shoulders above any man in the Yankee army. He commended Gen. Lee for keeping his own secrets, and told the people not to be discouraged because they did not hear from Lee over his own signature. He would come out all right in the end.

Mr. Stephens next spoke of the surrender of Vicksburg, and said that it was not an occurrence to cause discouragement or gloom; that the loss of Vicksburg was not as severe a blow as the loss of Fort Pillow, Island No. 10, or New-Orleans. The Confederacy had survived the loss of these points, and would survive the loss of Vicksburg, Port Hudson, and other places. Suppose, said he, we were to lose Mobile, Charleston and Richmond, it would not affect the heart of the Confederacy. We could, and would survive such losses, and finally secure our independence. He was not at all discouraged at the prospect; he never had the "blues" himself, and had no respect for sympathy for "croakers." The enemy has already appropriated twenty-seven hundred millions of dollars and one million of men for our subjugation, and after two years' war had utterly failed, and if the war continued for two years longer, they would fail to accomplish our subjugation. So far they had not broken the shell of the Confederacy. In the Revolutionary war the British at one time had possession of North Carolina, South Carolina, and other States; they took Philadelphia, and dispersed Congress, and for a long time held almost complete sway in the Colonies—yet they did not conquer our forefathers. In the war of 1812 the British captured the capital of the nation, Washington City, and burnt it, yet they did not conquer us; and if we are true to ourselves now, true to our birth-rights, the Yankee nation will utterly fail to subjugate us. Subjugation would be utter ruin and eternal death to Southern people and all that they hold most dear. He exhorted the people to give the Government a cordial support, to frown down all croakers and grumblers, and to remain united and fight to the bitter end for liberty and independence.

As for reconstruction, said Mr. STEPHENS, such a thing was impossible—such an idea must not be tolerated for instant. Reconstruction would not end the war, but would produce a more horrible war than that in which we are now engaged. The only terms on which we can obtain permanent peace is final and complete separation from the North. Rather than submit to anything short of that, let us all resolve to die like men worthy of freedom.

In regard to foreign intervention, Mr. STEPHENS advised his hearers to build no hopes on that yet awhile. He did not believe that the leading foreign powers ever intended that the North and South should be again united—they preferred that the separation should be permanent—but they considered both sides too strong now, and did not deem it good policy on their part to interfere and put a stop to the war. European nations see that the result of the war will be to establish a despotism at the North, and are therefore willing to allow it to continue a while longer.

The whole tone of Mr. STEPHENS' speech was very encouraging, and showed not the slightest sign of being discouraged by expressing entire confidence in the ability of the Confederacy to maintain our rights and achieve independence.

LINCOLN AND THE CONFEDERACY

During a debate in the Fifty-sixth congress Senator Tillman asserted that President Lincoln, at the peace conference with Alexander H. Stephens and others, wrote at the top of a sheet of paper the words: "Restoration of the Union," and handed it to Mr. Stephens, saying:

"With this one condition, you can fill up the paper with such other conditions as you think proper, and the United States will accept them."

Next day Senator Vest denied this story on the authority of a conversation he had had with Mr. Stephens some time after the conference with Mr. Lincoln.

Now comes the New Orleans Picayune with the official report of the commissioners of the Southern Confederacy, which confirms the statement of Senator Vest. The report is an interesting and valuable document, as it disposes in the most emphatic manner of all allegations which reflected on the character of Abraham Lincoln. It is as follows:

"To the President of the Confederate States: Under your letter of appointment of the 28th ult., we proceeded to seek an informal conference with Abraham Lincoln, president of the United States, upon the subject mentioned in the letter. The conference was granted and took place on the 3d inst., on board of a steamer anchored in Hampton Roads, where we met President Lincoln and the Hon. Mr. Seward, secretary of state of the United States. It continued for several hours, and was both full and explicit. We learned from them that the message of President Lincoln to the congress of the United States in December last explains clearly and distinctly his sentiments as to the terms, conditions and methods of proceeding by which peace can be secured to the people, and we were not informed that they would be modified or altered to obtain that end. We understood from him that no terms or proposals of any treaty or agreement looking to an ultimate settlement would be entertained or made by him with the authorities of the Confederate states, because that would be a recognition of their existence as a separate power, which under no circumstances would be done; and, for a like reason, that no such terms would be entertained by him for the states separately; that no extended truce or armistice (as at present advised) would be granted or allowed without a satisfactory assurance in advance of a complete restoration of the constitution and laws of the United States over all places within the states of the Confederacy; that whatever consequences may follow from the re-establishment of that authority must be accepted; but that individuals subject to pains and penalties under the laws of the United States might rely upon a very liberal use of the power confided to him to remit those pains and penalties if peace be restored. During the conference the proposed amendment to the constitution of the United States adopted by congress on the 31st ult. was brought to our notice.

"This amendment provided that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except for crime, should exist within the United States or any place within their jurisdiction, and that congress should have power to enforce this amendment by appropriate legislation. Very respectfully, etc.,

"ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS.

"R. M. T. HUNTER.

"JOHN A. CAMPBELL."

Feb. 1865

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LINCOLN and the LOYAL SOUTHERN GIRL

by Marie Layne



KINDNESS and Lincoln have long come to be synonymous terms. Few stories of his kindness are more interesting than one which came to light from a privately printed brochure, entitled "A SOUTHERN GIRL'S INTERVIEW WITH ABRAHAM LINCOLN."

This brochure is in the remarkable collection of Lincoln documents and other materials collected by a well-known individual in the United States.

The Southern girl of the story was Miss Mary T. Neilson, later Mrs. Jackson, who happens to be the mother of the owner of the brochure containing it. Her brother had left the University of Virginia, gone off with the Confederate army, and then she lost all trace of him.

With the belief, finally, that he might be possibly confined to some federal prison, his devoted sister decided to try to secure a pass in order that she herself could search for the lost one in various prisons.

Francis P. Blair, Sr., was one of the prominent friends who agreed to help her in this difficult plan. He took her to the White House and stated her case himself to President Lincoln.

The grave man listened intently. Then, turning to the young lady, he said in a calm manner: "You are loyal, of course."

"Yes. Loyal to the heart's core to Virginia." This was the instant answer which astonished her sponsor, and greatly embarrassed him as well, for it was with unusual diplomacy that he had succeeded in arranging the interview.

This girl's very own story tells us that "the President just seemed to be trying to look me through, withdrawing his hand from his pocket and stroking his chin. We both gazed steadily at each other for a moment. Then, turning to his desk, he wrote a few lines, handed the paper to me, and bowed us out."

Young Miss Neilson was positive her request had been refused. And with cast-down spirit she opened the note and, much to her surprise, read the following:

"To all commanders of forts containing rebel prisoners;

"Permit the bearer, Miss Neilson, to pass in and make inquiries about her brother; she is an honest girl and can be trusted.

A. Lincoln"

There is a happy sequel to this unusual story. It is that this honest girl succeeded at last in finding her brother in a prison camp in Ohio.

As the story itself so well shows, she was an ardent Southerner. She aided Confederate wounded until the end of the war, but never did Lincoln have a stauncher admirer than this southern belle after his amazing kindness towards her. ★ ★ ★

RALPH McGILL

In these days we write of Lincoln.

One January 10, 1865, an editorial in the Charleston, S.C., Mercury said that in all departments of the Confederate government, military, political and foreign, "There reigned a pandemonium of imbecility, laxness, laxity, weakness and failure."

It was a true statement, though the editor might have reflected that he had, in previous months and years, encouraged such a situation by his own excitements and encouragements of resistance.

Thousands of soldiers were deserting. Supply was broken down. Areas of states rights defection, such as in North Carolina and Georgia, were growing under direction of the governors of those states.

Gen. Lee went to Richmond to see President Davis and to express his own grave concern.

There is a record of his later report to his son Curtis: "I visited Congress today and they did not seem to be able to do anything except to eat peanuts and chew tobacco while my army is starving. I told them the condition my men were in and something must be done at once, but I can't get them to do anything, or they are unable to do anything. When this war began I told these people that unless every man should do his whole duty they would repent it, and now — they will repent it."

CONFERENCE WAS DOOMED

It was against this background, with U.S. Grant exerting mounting pressure against Richmond, that the peace conference at Hampton Roads, Va., was held on February 3, 1865. Negotiations to set up the meeting had begun in early January.

The conference was doomed before it began.

Jefferson Davis had bound the commissioners to accept no terms save that of recognition of the already defeated Confederacy as an independent nation.

Lincoln suggested to the commissioners that payment for the slave property was quite possible. He had a plan to appropriate \$40 million for that purpose.

Lincoln, who knew and liked Alexander Stephens, Vice President of the Confederacy, took him aside and held out a paper he took from his pocket. "Stephens," he said, "let me write 'Union' on the top of that page and you may write below it whatever else you please."

These and other proposals had no place in the formal discussions because Stephens told the President they were limited to treating it on the basis of recognition of the Confederacy. (Stephens came home to stay. He developed an almost psychopathic dislike of Davis.)

Lincoln returned to Washington. He was so filled with his idea that he submitted the documents he had taken to Hampton Roads to his cabinet. Only Seward agreed with him.

Lincoln said, sadly, "Why, gentlemen, how long is this (the war) going to last? It is not going to end this side of a hundred days is it? It is costing us \$4 million a day. There are the \$400 million not counting the loss of life and property in the meantime. But you are all against me, and I will not press the matter upon you."

SENSE OF JUSTICE

There was in the man Lincoln an almost awesome sense of justice, compassion and destiny. His genius was that of common sense. He understood that the war was, in reality, a conflict of systems. He never condemned the South for owning slaves.

He understood, and said, that they were there because climate and crops had made their labor remunerative as it was not in the North. He never ascribed any superior virtues to the people of any region.

This is the season when Republican speakers extoll the principles of Lincoln. Some are cynical, some sincere. But even those who are merely making political hay have some sense of the parallel of history between 1865 and now. The civil rights bill is in the Congress because of defiant refusals to make the routine basic citizenship rights of 19 million Americans equal with those of 172 million.

The stubborn resistance of the slave-owning forces to any reform and, lastly, to Lincoln's offers of compensation, also has its parallel today. Not a single reform in the field of civil rights has come voluntarily. All of them, the abolishment of the white primaries and other schemes to restrict voting, the end of discrimination in schools, in public transportation, and other areas of the commonly shared life of this country, came only through federal action.

Now we have further resistance and insistence on arguing that publicly licensed public accommodations are not really public — but private. It would have been possible years ago to channel the forces of change and let them work gradually. But we didn't. The Lincoln years remind us of what the cost of folly and blindness can be.



Lincoln Lore

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A VIEW OF LINCOLN FROM A HOUSE DIVIDED

Lincoln-related documents turn up in the most unlikely places. The Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina Library in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is rich in manuscript materials having to do with Lincoln's Confederate antagonists, but it has never been considered a major source of Lincolniana. The published catalogue of this vast collection, a substantial volume in itself, contains a subject guide, and there is only one reference to Abraham Lincoln in the whole index. However, it has proved to be a reference worth exploring. For many years, this collection has contained the papers of Nathaniel Henry Rhodes Dawson.

Dawson is typical of the sorts of persons about whom one would seek information in the Southern Historical Collection. Born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1829, Dawson was the son of Lawrence E. and Mary Rhodes Dawson. He moved to Alabama in 1842, where he attended St. Joseph's College in Spring Hill. He became a lawyer in 1851 and moved to Selma, where he became a prominent citizen and a minor power in the Democratic party. Dawson married twice in the 1850's; both Annie E. (Mathews) Dawson and Mary E. (Tarrow) Dawson bore him a child. In 1860, he was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention. In 1861, he volunteered as an officer in the Fourth Alabama Regiment of Volunteers. Dawson was elected to serve in the Alabama legislature in 1863. At the end of the war and his term in the legislature, he obtained a pardon from President Andrew Johnson and resumed private law practice. His interest in politics continued. Dawson served as a member of various county, district, and state Democratic committees and as an elector for Horace Greeley's 1872 presidential ticket. In 1875, he became president of the Commercial Bank of Alabama and a year later was chosen as a trustee of the University of Alabama. In

1880, he was again elected to the state legislature, and in 1884, he became president of the state bar association. He died in 1895.

What separates Dawson from the many Confederate soldiers and Democratic politicians whose lives can be studied from documents in the Southern Historical Collection is his marriage in 1863 to Elodie Todd, for she was Mary Todd Lincoln's half sister. The letters that Dawson and Elodie exchanged while they were engaged and he was away in the Confederate service are a source of information on the Todd family which has not been tapped, apparently, by previous students of Lincoln's in-laws. William H. Townsend's *Lincoln and the Bluegrass: Slavery and Civil War in Kentucky* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1955), an updated version of his *Lincoln and His Wife's Home Town* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1929), contains no mention of the collection, though his book remains the best source of information on the Todd family. Ruth Painter Randall's *Mary Lincoln: Biography of a Marriage* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953) relies heavily on Townsend's work for Mary's upbringing and makes no mention of the Dawson papers. *Mrs. Abraham Lincoln: A Study of Her Personality and Her Influence on Lincoln* by W.A. Evans (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1932) was an attempt at a psycho-biography of Mary Todd Lincoln and stressed the allegedly high incidence of mental instability in her family. However, Evans did not use Dawson's papers and made a minor error of fact about Elodie Todd and N.H.R. Dawson. There is certainly nothing in the letters which



FIGURE 1. Elodie Todd

Courtesy of Lloyd Ostendorf

upsets the work of these previous students of the Todd relations. Nevertheless, there are confirmations of hunches about the Todd family and evidence on at least one aspect of the family's history that was not previously known. There is an inter-

esting portrait of two of Lincoln's in-laws who have previously been little more than names. One can also gain a unique insight into the way the Confederate Todds viewed their Yankee sister and brother-in-law.

Elodie Todd

Elodie Todd was one of sixteen children sired by Robert Smith Todd of Lexington, Kentucky. She was the seventh of the eight children (who lived to maturity—another died in infancy) born to Robert S. Todd's second wife, Elizabeth Humphreys. Elodie was born in 1844, two years after her half sister Mary Todd married Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois. Mary was the fourth of six children (who lived to maturity—one died in infancy) by Eliza Parker, Todd's first wife. Since she had left home even before Elodie was born and since she was twenty-six years older, Mary and Elodie, though half sisters, were barely nodding acquaintances. The only times Elodie ever saw her sister Mary were in 1847, when the Lincolns paid a visit to Lexington en route to Washington for Lincoln to assume his seat in the House of Representatives; in 1848, when Mary and the children returned to Lexington without Congressman Lincoln; and in 1849, when the Lincolns visited Lexington to attend to Robert S. Todd's estate (he died in 1849). Mary saw Elodie last, then, when her young half sister was but five years old.

There were, despite the lack of intimate acquaintance, some obvious family resemblances between Elodie and Mary Todd. They were both cultured and refined women. Elodie's accomplishments were especially musical ones. She played the piano well and sang well. Dawson wrote her repeatedly, saying that he longed to be with her and to hear her sing and play the piano. Her talents were much in demand in Selma society to provide entertainment at various patriotic money-raising affairs during the war. Elodie wrote humorous letters and enjoyed society. She commented in May of 1861 on a local regiment "composed of the handsomest men [she] . . . ever saw & all seem to be selected gentlemen, & so happy & merry." In the same month she and her younger sister Kittie (Katherine) "went over to the Encampment . . . and spent a very pleasant evening dancing until eleven o'clock." She seemed pleased that "the wit & beauty of Selma were assembled" at the ball. She kept up with political events and could weave them into her letters with sprightly humor. In a moment of light-hearted self-deprecation, Elodie claimed that her family had thought she would be an old maid who would stay home to take care of her mother after the "handsome daughters" were gone. ". . . I really believe," she added in reference to her engagement to Dawson, "they all think I am committing a sin to give a thought to any other than the arrangements they have made for me but as this is the age when Secession, Freedom & rights are asserted, I am claiming mine & do not doubt but I shall succeed in obtaining them . . ." She also possessed some of the more controversial Todd traits, of which she showed an appealing self-awareness. Kidding Dawson again about their engagement, she said, "I told Mother that I thought she had better give her consent & approval at once, for my mind was made up & I felt myself more of a Todd than ever & they are noted for their determination or as *malicious people* would say *obstinacy* . . ." On another occasion she admitted to Dawson that her mother had "always predicted my Temper & Tongue would get me into Trouble. . . ."

The Todd family itself was divided in some respects, and there were sharp differences between Elodie Todd and Mrs. Lincoln. The most obvious, of course, was that Elodie Todd was a staunch secessionist (only one of Eliza Parker's children was a secessionist; only one of Elizabeth Humphreys's children was pro-Union). Elodie always referred to Lincoln's party as the "black Republicans," and she pictured the Southern cause as a revolt against "Northern Tyranny" for the sake of liberty. On the Fourth of July, 1861, she exclaimed, ". . . what would we be without our liberty, the few left of us a poor unhappy set who would prefer death a thousand times to recognizing once a black Republican ruler." She called Lincoln's 1860 Southern Democratic opponent, Kentuckian John C. Breckinridge, her "model for Politicians." Her zeal for Southern liberty grew with the progress of the war. In July, 1861, after there had been the first large-scale fighting of a previously largely bloodless war, she wrote with unconscious irony, "I have thought of the many who would & must die to

purchase [liberty], . . . there is not a man among you who would not willingly prefer death to slavery. . . ." She did "not now think of peace for a moment, fighting alone can accomplish our end and that hard & bloody."

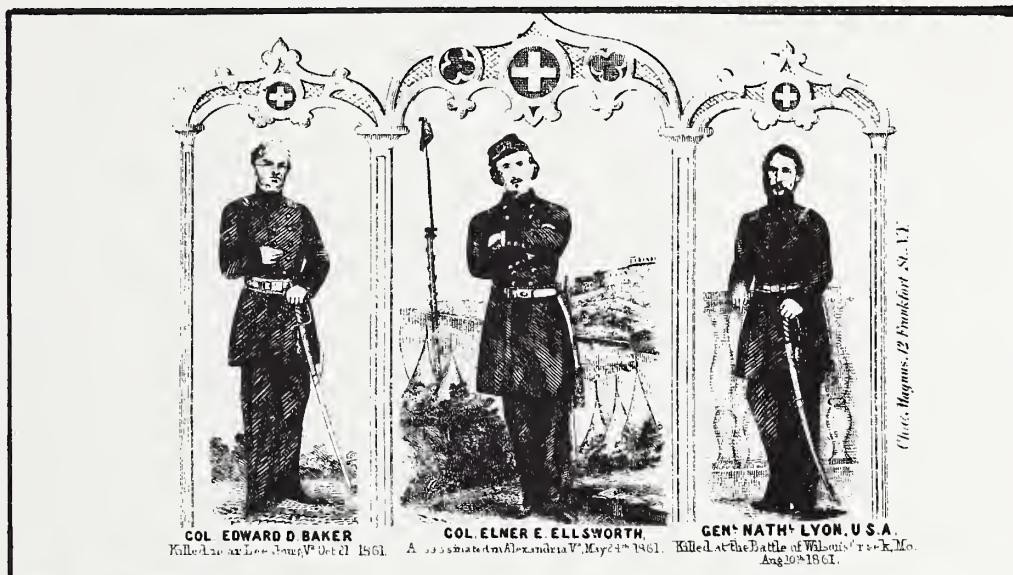
The young Kentuckian contributed more than hot words to the Confederate cause. She seems to have spent most of the time Dawson was in the service in sewing items for the Confederate soldiers. She took the work seriously, spending so much time on it that she had little time left to spend in reading. After the merry entertainments of the early months after Sumter when there was little bloodshed, she deemed it improper to engage in wild merriment while the soldiers were suffering at the front. Dawson wrote her that he was "grateful . . . to know that you have such proper feelings in regard to amusements, at times when your friends are in danger—on the day [in question] . . . we were all day in line of battle, & on that night slept on our arms— It would mortify me to think that at such a time, you could enjoy the festivities of a ball room. . . ."

Unlike her sister Mary, Elodie chose to marry a man, not of democratic manners and sentiments, but of an aristocratic, even snobbish, nature. When Dawson heard that one of Elodie's brothers was thinking of joining the army, he cautioned him "not to join the ranks as a private—The duties are very arduous, he would not like them—a gentleman" would not find them at all suitable. By contrast, Abraham Lincoln had served in the Illinois militia in the Black Hawk War, first as a captain and later as a private. One cannot imagine the Rail-splitter's dispensing such advice for gentlemen. At the Battle of Bull Run, Dawson was separated from his unit and in the confusion of battle could not find it to rejoin it. Rumors circulated back home in Selma that he had been seen "walking fast" away from the battle. Dawson was incensed at the allegation of cowardice and quickly attributed it to envy. The problem with the man Dawson thought responsible for circulating the rumor was that he "envied all above him . . . [.] He envies me I know. . . ." He attributed the rumors on another occasion to "the people, who are generally anxious to believe evil of gentlemen."

Although his aristocratic code taught him a paternalistic regard for those below him, Dawson did not admire the masses. As an officer, he did try to set an example for his men by sharing their hardships. On long marches he wore a knapsack with a heavy overcoat rolled on it, just as the soldiers did. On an eighteen-mile march, he went on foot even though a gentleman-friend offered him a horse and buggy. He did not prove, on this occasion, equal to the task, and the amusing outcome was reported to his fiancée with no self-conscious irony at all: "My feet were so blistered [and] swollen & I was so much fatigued, that I got a room, at a hotel, & went to bed & was unable to come on here, until this morning— I am very lame, have taken a violent cold, have been in bed . . ." Dawson saw it as his duty to "visit the hospital daily to see our sick & always have my heart made sad—The pallets are occupied, with men, who are wan looking objects . . . [.] I always try to cheer them up, but it is a difficult duty." There was apparently no chaplain in the Fourth Alabama, and Dawson assumed the duty of shepherd to his flock. "On Sundays," he explained, "I read several chapters of the bible to as many of my men, as choose to come in, and we have some good vocal music . . . [.] Nevertheless, he commented also on "the depravity of our soldiers. . . [.] I do not think any other feeling than one of duty could induce me, with my present feelings, to adopt war as my occupation. . . ."

Dawson took an aristocrat's pride in his family's accom-

FIGURE 2. (facing page 2) Colonel Elmer Ephraim Ellsworth must certainly have been the most famous Colonel in the Civil War. Vignettes of his death, portraits of Ellsworth, pictures of his avenger, and mottoes invoking his memory appeared on many different patriotic envelopes during the Civil War. Southerners, as the Elodie Todd-N. H. R. Dawson correspondence reveals, also considered his death something of a sensation and interpreted it as divine retribution for invading their country. Three patriotic envelopes featuring Ellsworth are pictured on the facing page.



plishments. Honors came to aristocrats without any unseemly striving. "My father," said Dawson, "always declined political position, tho' he had inducements offered that would have lured a more ambitious man— He was the contemporary & peer of Mr Barnwell & Mr Rhett—their acknowledged superior & leader at the bar— He always advised me to pursue the law exclusively. . . ." He shared his Victorian culture's sentimental veneration of women (and especially of motherhood), and his aristocratic feelings made the female's ideal role particularly circumscribed, ethereal, and retiring:

God, who made man, saw that woman alone could fill the gasping void of companionship, in his bosom, and also created her, that her love might teach him the love he should bear to his creator— I do not think men could have received the Gospel, without the inspiring faith of the gentler sex to level him to an appreciation of their truth— All of the virtuous impulses, I ever feel, are attributable to the teachings of my sainted mother and the influence of your sex—without them I would have been a barbarian . . . [.]

Three weeks later he advised his fiancée thus:

I hope you will not become Secretary [?] for any aid Society— The ladies have been very useful & kind, but I would prefer that you remain an independent contributor— I am opposed to all female societies, as I have never seen one, not even a Bible or Church Society, where unpleasant controversies did not arise—a lady should let her influence always be felt, in all good works, but she should never expose herself to the calumnies of the evil minded. . . .

To be sure, Dawson encouraged the same kind of responsibility for inferiors among women as men:

I rejoice that you agree with me about societies of all kinds— I never wish to see you a member of one—but will always desire that you should do your full share in works of charity and benevolence— The poor will always, if my wishes influence, call you friend . . . [.]

An aristocrat's disdain for ambitious money-getting, a Democrat's traditional distrust of monopoly, and a patriot's dislike of selfishness in the midst of national crisis, all combined to make Dawson an enemy of wartime speculators. Salt was a precious commodity in the blockaded, undeveloped, one-crop South, and the "salt monopoly" apparently became a hot topic in Civil War Selma. It was a question which greatly excited Dawson:

. . . I wish these speculators could be forced into the service of the country & made to shew their patriotism in a better mode— I have no [illeg.] of such Shylocks, & I hope Public Opinion will bring them back to their propriety— The State should permit no speculation, by monopolists in articles of . . . necessity— In some parts of this state [Virginia] these "salt mice" have been threatened by Judge Lynch— Salt has been scarce here in the army on account of this disgraceful monopoly— Such heartless men are not friendly to the Confederate states . . . [.]

This was not just a temporary attitude bred of wartime emergency for Dawson. His aristocratic code dictated a disdain for new money. Commenting on a visit to Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1862, Dawson said, "Judging from all I see, I should say the society of Raleigh was cultivated [and] refined—in opposition to what we are so frequently disgusted with in new communities—tinsel pretension— Family has its influence, & parvenues are properly appreciated . . . [.] I have learned to hate the blatant democracy of our society— which would reduce any gentleman to insignificance—or to an infamous equality. . . ."

To complete the picture, Dawson was, as most of the self-styled Southern aristocracy were, a member of the Episcopal Church. He prided himself on reading "the English classics." He copied the ideals and ways of the English gentry, adopted their dislike of parvenues, and shared their idealization of a lower class that knew its place:

The poor private in the ranks, who bears uncomplainingly, all of his privations, must leave a deep well of patriotic feeling— I look at them frequently with admiration— Many of them have wife & children, at home, dependent on charity, & yet, they seem content— No country can be strong, without such a peasantry— or yeomanry—as we say in English. . . [.]

Views of Lincoln

N.H.R. Dawson, of course, had never met Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Lincoln. Elodie did not know them well. The first mentions of the brother-in-law, now President of an enemy nation, were in a lighthearted vein in keeping with the early view that there might not be a war at all and that, if there were one, it would be of brief duration and be settled by one great battle. Dawson wrote Elodie from Virginia on May 8, 1861, asking her, "Can't you prevail upon your brother in Law, A.L. to change his policy, & make peace [?]" Two days later, Dawson said he thought the war would be short because the North would soon see how ridiculous it was to think of subjugating the South: "The idea of subjugating us must be preposterous, and I think, if I could be allowed to have the ear of my future *brother in law*, I could persuade him to abandon the idea; if he ever entertained it— Can't you use your influence or get your sister Miss Kittie [a very young teenager] to use hers [?]"

Six days later, Dawson was still ringing changes on the humorous possibilities involved in the situation. He stated his wish that Elodie would write Mrs. Lincoln "so that in case of being taken prisoner I will not be too severely dealt with— Do you not think it was a very politic step in me to engage such an advocate at the head quarters of the Enemy." Elodie replied in the same bantering vein, ". . . pray do you think to inform *Brother Abe* would do you any good, he would make you suffer for yourself my being such a secessionist too."

By another coincidence, Kittie had a nodding acquaintance with Colonel Elmer Ellsworth of the Seventh New York Regiment. Elodie wrote Dawson to report that "Kittie says if you take her beau Colonel Ellsworth prisoner just send him to her & she will see that he does not escape. . . [.]" Dawson replied that he would not "let her throw herself away on Col. Ellsworth—as she must have a confederate Col. for her beau . . . [.]" This joke ended in tragedy and bitterness when Ellsworth became the first casualty of the Civil War. Dawson wrote in a somewhat unfeeling vein:

I hope Miss Kate was not interested in him, more than in an ordinary acquaintance— You know he exhorted his soldiers to invade the South & provided [promised ?] them "beauty & booty"— Providence seems to have cut him off, as soon as he touched our soil, and it will not surprise me, if the army, led on by hate, does not meet the same fate— There is great bitterness felt on our side, & we will kill all that we can lay our hands on . . . [.]

One day later he wrote in an even more bitter mood: "I rejoice that the 7 New York Reg was the first to be cut to pieces, & I hope a similar fate awaits all the enemies of my country— You will be surprised that I am so vengeful, but the invasion of Va. has stirred my blood—and, I think it would be a pleasure to meet our enemies in martial combat . . . [.]" Elodie later informed Dawson that Ellsworth "was only an acquaintance of Kittie's [.]"

Political disagreements could not help but color the view these Southerners took of their famous Northern relation. The correspondence began to take on a slightly grimmer tone after Colonel Ellsworth's death. "Kittie is writing to Sister Mary (Mrs Abe Lincoln)," she told Dawson, "and I requested her to mention the fact of my being interested in you & should you fall into the hands of the [black republicans?], hope you will be kindly received, presented with a passport to leave King Abe's Kingdom & returned to me with care but I am fearful since Ellsworth's death that the Southerners will fare badly if they get within their clutches and hope you will keep as far as possible from them . . . [.]"

Though she had previously denounced "Northern Tyranny," Elodie had not yet spread the charge to her brother-in-law, but the phrase "King Abe" broke the ice. However, such epithets remained uncharacteristic of Elodie's correspondence and, when used, were always kept within the realm of party politics and governmental policy. She never denounced Lincoln's personal character. With her this was an important and sensitive matter of principle:

(Continued in next issue)



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A VIEW OF LINCOLN FROM A HOUSE DIVIDED (Cont.)

. . . there is not one of us that cherish an unkind thought or feeling toward him and for this reason we feel as acutely every remark derogatory to him, except as a President. I never go in Public that my feelings are not pounded or are we exempt in Matt's own home for people constantly wish he may be hung & all such evils may attend his footsteps. We would be devoid of all feeling or sympathy did we not feel for them & had we no love for *Mary*, would love or respect her as the daughter of a Father much loved & whose memory is fondly cherished by those who were little children when he died I wish I were not so sensitive but it is *decided weakness* of the entire family and to struggle against it seems for naught...[.]

One detects an undertone of feeling that he had been properly chastised—perhaps in his switch from the overly familiar “Abe” to “Mr. Lincoln”—in Dawson’s reply: “I am really glad that you have such feelings about Mr Lincoln—I have never been able to entertain for him any unkindness, save as an enemy to my country—I have never believed the slanders upon him as a man—and accord to him the respect that is due a gentleman—It would indeed be strange if you felt otherwise, & did not love your sister . . . [.]”

Despite granting President Lincoln the ultimate compliment available in N. H. R. Dawson’s vocabulary, calling him a “gentleman,” the Alabama soldier could not help interpreting the Lincoln administration from his own Southern aristocratic viewpoint. For a long time, Dawson thought that Lincoln would be unable to prosecute the war as soon as Northern society realized the expense involved in raising armies. “It is thought,” Dawson reported to Elodie, “that the financial difficulties of Mr Lincoln will be so great as to embarrass the plans of the campaign—I hope that the Capitalists will not be willing to open their coffers to his draughts. Our Armies will fight without pay . . . [.]” Dawson was

clearly a believer in the Southern picture of the North as a dollar-conscious Yankee kingdom of selfish grab and gain. Romantically, he believed the South so untainted by materialism that even the common soldiers would fight without pay. Despite being a politician himself, Dawson’s aristocratic ideal of politics ruled out party ambition (hence his father’s refusal to serve, though he was a better lawyer than Rhett and Barnwell, famous South Carolina political leaders). He thought in July of 1861, that “Mr Lincoln should now rise above party & give peace to the country—but I fear he will not be equal to the position— He is too much a party man— I say this, my own dear girl, knowing how you feel, & with no idea that it will give you pain . . . [.]”

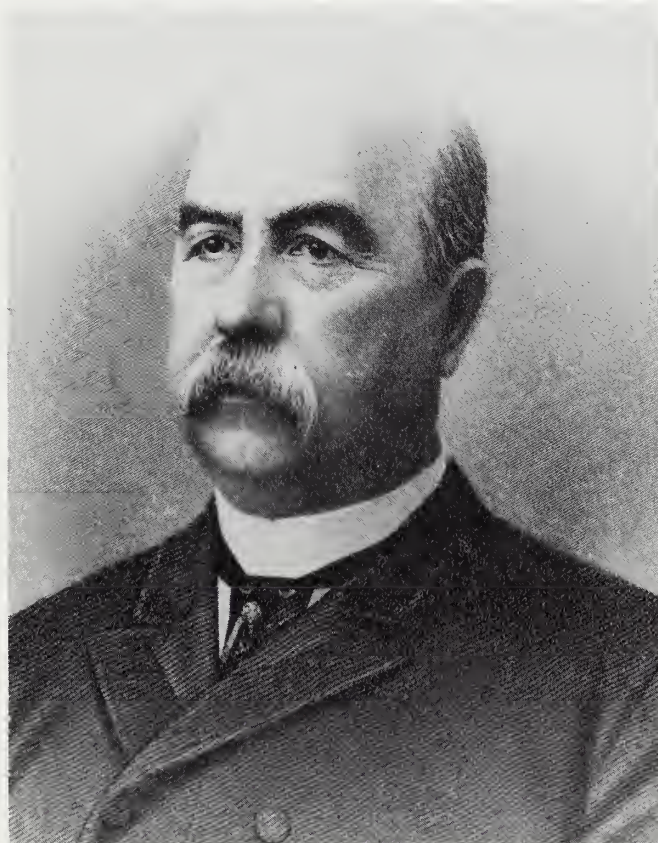
Elodie Todd replied to Dawson’s cautious defamation of Lincoln’s political character in a none-too-protective way:

I do not think of peace and know well Mr Lincoln is not *man enough* to dare to make it, he is but a tool in the hands of his Party and would not brave their wrath by such a proposition, how nobly he could redeem himself if he had the cour-

age he is no more fitted for the office than many others who have recently occupied it and we may date our trouble from the time when we allowed *Party* to place in the chair a President entirely disregarding his *worth* ability or capacity for it, and I hope our Confederacy may guard against it . . . [.]

Mary Todd’s sister then revealed the strength of family ties in the aristocratic Todd clan by admitting her double standard for judging the Todd family:

I could not be offended at your remarks concerning Mr L— Knowing they were not intended more for him than for his party or than for any other *Blk Rep. President*, and you do not say as much as I do, tho’ that is a privilege I allow myself exclusively, to abuse my relations as much as I desire but no one else can do the same before me or even say a word against



Courtesy Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill

FIGURE 1. N. H. R. Dawson

Kentucky.

By and large, Elodie Todd and N. H. R. Dawson as well were true to this standard—even to the extent of disbelieving anything they read in the newspapers which reflected poorly on Mary Todd. On July 22, 1861, she wrote one of the harshest appraisals of Mary Todd that appears anywhere in her correspondence.

I see from today's paper Mrs. Lincoln is indignant at my Brother David's being in the Confederate Service and declares "that by no word or act of hers would he escape punishment for his treason against her husband's government should he fall into their hands"—I do not believe she ever said it—and if she did & meant it she is no longer a Sister of mine, nor deserves to be called a woman of nobleness & truth & God grant my noble & brave hearted brother will never fall into their hands & have to suffer death *twice over*, and he could do nothing which would make *me prouder of him*, than he is doing now *fighting for his country*, what would she do to me do you suppose, I have so much to answer for?

Her fiancée replied with a letter which indicates that Dawson might have been less restrained in his appraisal of Lincoln had he not felt that he must be careful of Elodie's touchy Todd family pride:

I do not believe that Mrs Lincoln ever expressed herself, as you state, about your brother David.— If she did, it is in very bad taste, and in worse temper— and unlike all the representations I have seen of her character— But you will learn, my dearest, that a wife, soon becomes wrapped up in the fortunes of her husband & will tolerate in her relations no opposition to his wishes . . . [.]

Was Dawson hinting that Elodie might some day sever her loyalties from the Todd family and share a more "objective" view of the narrow party politician in the White House?

If Dawson thought so, he was quite wrong. In a dramatic episode, Elodie proved her loyalty to the Todd family name. In December of 1861, Selma citizens staged a "Tableau," a sort of costume charade in which living people staged a motionless picture, to raise money for a local regiment. Elodie was invited and intended to go, until she saw the programme:

. . . I see my Brotherinlaw Mr Lincoln is to be introduced twice I have declined as all my feeling & self respect have not taken wings & flown. I must confess that I have never been more hasty or indignant in my life than since the last step has been taken. What have we done to deserve this attempt to personally insult & wound our feelings in so public a manner. We have suffered what they never have and perhaps never will in severing ties of blood . . . [.] Dr. Kendree and Mrs Kendree last summer proposed that in one of the Tableaux we should introduce the two Scenes which they propose entertaining their audience with Tuesday night and I then in their *own home* showed the indignation that I felt at a proposition made to wound me. . . [they wished] Mr Lincoln would be *caught & hung* . . . that was enough but I feel I can never feel kindly again toward those who take part in this, you do not know all we have taken from some of the people of this place, no not one half and *pride* has kept us from shewing them what we felt, I am afraid I shall never love Selma and I feel thankful that I am not dependent on its inhabitants for my happiness, hereafter I will stay to myself and keep out of the . . . way of those to whom my presence seems to be obnoxious . . . [.]

Elodie did stay home and apparently suffered a period of ostracism which severed her relations with her neighbors in Selma. Dawson tried to smooth over the difficulty as well as he could, explaining that Lincoln had become the "personification" of the enemy, but Elodie continued to complain bitterly about Selma, much to Dawson's obvious irritation. Todd family pride was a powerful force.

The Todd Family: A Startling Revelation

Most historians have assumed that Mary Todd Lincoln took an interest in political affairs that was extraordinary for a woman in her day because politics had been such a large and natural part of the Todd family life. Her father, Robert S. Todd, had been a politician himself. Lexington, though not the state capital, was an intensely political town because one of its citizens, Henry Clay, was a long-time contender for the United States Presidency. Todd was apparently associated with local men of ambition who wished to see Clay become President. As William Townsend has shown, Todd was involved in bitter political disputes because he supported the 1833 Kentucky law forbidding the importation of slaves into the state for purposes of sale. Some supporters of the law, written at the height of anti-slavery feeling within the South itself, argued that, without fresh infusions of black population, the slave power in the state would wither and eventually emancipate the slaves. Powerful pro-slavery interests in the state fought for the repeal of the nonimportation law and gained it just before Todd's death. When he ran for office, Todd received the bitter denunciation of the pro-slavery interests for being what he was not, an emancipationist. Thus Mary and the other Todd children knew the bitterness of politics as well as the satisfactions of being a family thought worthy of representing their community's political interests. Nevertheless, it is assumed that Mary gained a love of politics from the partisan milieu of her early life.

N. H. R. Dawson debated, while in the army, whether he should become a politician or devote himself to law practice when he ended his tour of duty. In May of 1861, he asked his fiancée what her feelings were about his future career. Dutifully, Elodie replied that she would be content with either choice. "One might suppose," she said, "to behold Mr Lincoln's Political career that my family would be content with Politics I am used to such a life My Father having followed such a one himself." When he asked again, he got a very different answer from Robert S. Todd's young daughter:

As to a Political life I think almost any choice preferable and more conducive to happiness, it is a life of trials vexations & cares, and in the end a grand disappointment to all the [illeg.] & purposes of the Politician himself & of his friends, that [there ?] are a few empty honors [nor] do they compensate when gained, for the trouble of a laborious life to please the World, which does indeed turn every day your friends today, your foes tomorrow, ready to tarnish your fair name with any untruth that will serve to promote party purposes. I know my Father's life was embittered after the selection of a Political life was made by his friends for him & he accepted it and after all the sacrifices he made for them & to acquire for himself Fame & a name which lived only a few years after he slumbered in his grave, and it was well he did not live longer to plunge deeper in for every other life had lost its charm and there was but the one that added he thought to his happiness. Yet I am wrong I expect to judge all by the few I have known to be otherwise than happy in such a choice, as much depends upon disposition and any life may have proved to have had the same effect . . . [.]

This is a remarkable letter which ones does not know quite how to interpret. It is, in the first place, the letter of a seventeen-year-old girl. It is, in the second place, the letter of a girl who was but five years old when her father died. Therefore, it is not altogether to be trusted.

Nevertheless, it is a unique view of a family which has remained shrouded in mystery and deserves careful consideration. It is unclear whether Robert S. Todd was truly embittered before his death (though Elodie says so) or whether the family projected their own bitterness, derived from the speed with which his fame faded after his death, onto their memory of Robert Todd. Such an interpretation would be congruent

with Elodie's statement that what name he gained faded quickly after his death and with the fact that she surely learned of this bitterness from her family long after her father's death. Probably a girl of five was unable to understand a bitterness bred of political chicanery.

Whether Elodie's view of politics and of her father's political career should cause us to reevaluate Mary Todd's alleged love of politics is a still more difficult question. Mary left home before her father engaged in the heated campaign for the state senate in 1845, in which Todd denounced his opponent as a man in a "fit of malice and desperation," "an habitual and notorious falsifier, an unscrupulous and indiscriminate calumniator, reckless alike of fame, of honor, and of truth," and a "miserable old man" who engaged in "unprovoked assaults, unfounded charges and illiberal insinuations." She was away in Springfield when her father was called by his opponent a "weak and vicious" man of "craven spirit" who worked as a legislator in the lower house to gain favors for the Branch Bank of Kentucky of which Todd was himself the president. Moreover, Robert S. Todd died in the midst of a campaign for reelection to the Kentucky Senate, and those of his family who were with him may somehow have blamed the campaigning for killing him. Especially to a child of five, it may have seemed as though whatever it was that took the father away from the house all the time on business (campaigning) simply took him away forever. From all these feelings and emotions Mary Todd Lincoln could well have

been quite immune. She may therefore have imbibed a love of politics from the early career of a father whose later career and death in the midst of campaigning left younger members of the family bitter about the profession of politics.

Other intimate glimpses of the Todd family provide interesting food for thought. Dawson seems to have been a devout man who took his Episcopalianism seriously as religion and not merely as a badge of his status in Southern society. He was distressed that Elodie, although she attended church, was not a full-fledged member. Elodie's professions of lack of adequate faith sound a bit perfunctory, but the subject appeared often enough in her letters to indicate genuine concern. "It was not necessary," she told her fiancée in a typical passage, "for you to ask me to pray for you as I have not allowed a day to pass without doing so, nor will not, altho' my prayers may not be heard & I regret each day more & more that I am not a good christian, as such my prayers might be of some avail, but I fear the life I have lead, does not entitle me to hope for much and it is so hard to be good. . . ." Dawson was quite concerned, and her reluctance in the face of urgings like this one surely betokened serious thought on the subject; ". . . I know that you have all the purity—all the essential qualifications—that would authorize you to take this step—that you are in all things, save the public confession—a christian . . . [.] There may have been some religious confusion among all the Todd children. Elodie's mother took her to the Presbyterian Church, but Elodie had gone to the Episcopal



FIGURE 2. The Todd home in Lexington is to be restored soon.

From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Church at some time in her past. It will be remembered that Mary Todd Lincoln became a Presbyterian after her original Episcopalian affiliations. Elodie's confusion was doubtless increased by the fact that Dawson would have preferred her choosing the Episcopal Church, though he most wanted her to choose to make a full commitment for *some* church.

Elodie Todd's letters also seem to indicate that the family was a close-knit and happy one. "We have always been happy together," she told Dawson, "and never known what the feeling was that prompted others to always seek happiness away from home, and to feel miserable when compelled to remain there." Of course, Elodie did not have the experience Mary had, of gaining a new mother who was disliked by Mary's own grandmother. For Elodie, though, there was only one problematical member of the family.

Dr. George Todd is my Father's youngest son by his first marriage, but an almost total stranger to me for in my whole life I have never seen him but twice, the first time he was a practicing Physician, the next after my Father's death and owing then to some unpleasant family disturbances, there has never since existed between the older members of my family and himself & his older brother the same feeling as before or that is felt for our sisters I was too young at the time to even understand why the feeling was. When he called on [brother] David in Richmond, David would not see him or recognize him this I feel sorry for and hope they will yet make friends . . . [.]

It was little wonder that the other Todd children hated George. Robert S. Todd had written a will, but George contested it successfully on the technical grounds that there was only one witness to the document. This was a direct blow at Robert S. Todd's widow and the second batch of children because it meant the bulk of the estate, instead of passing to Mrs. Todd, had to be liquidated and divided among all the children. It speaks well for Mrs. Todd's restraint or for Elodie's loyalty to the family name that the young girl was seemingly unaware of what George had done and hoped there would be a reconciliation between him and other members of the family. Otherwise, Elodie made no distinctions in sisterly affection for all the children, whether by the first or second marriage.

It is somewhat surprising to find a member of the Todd family so violently anti-English as Elodie was. It was almost more than she could bear to have to hope that England would intervene in the Confederacy's behalf. On February 1, 1862, she wrote Dawson that she wished "we would have Peace or that France & England would recognize us, if they intend to, I confess I have little patience left, and wish we could take our time in allowing them to recognize the Confederate States. I hope they will pay for their tardiness in giving an enormous price, but I should not be so *spiteful*, but I never could tolerate the English and will not acknowledge like some members of the Family that [we] are of English descent, I prefer being *Irish* and certainly possess some Irish traits. . . ." Not only does this passage inform us of a peculiar difference of opinion within the family in regard to England, it also reminds us of what is easy to forget: Confederate diplomacy was unnatural. Southerners, at least the Presbyterian ones, hated England as much as Northerners did, and their desire for rescue by England was pure expedience. It showed in the King Cotton theory of diplomacy as well: it was surely an odd way to make friends with England by denying her the Southern cotton she needed for her mills.

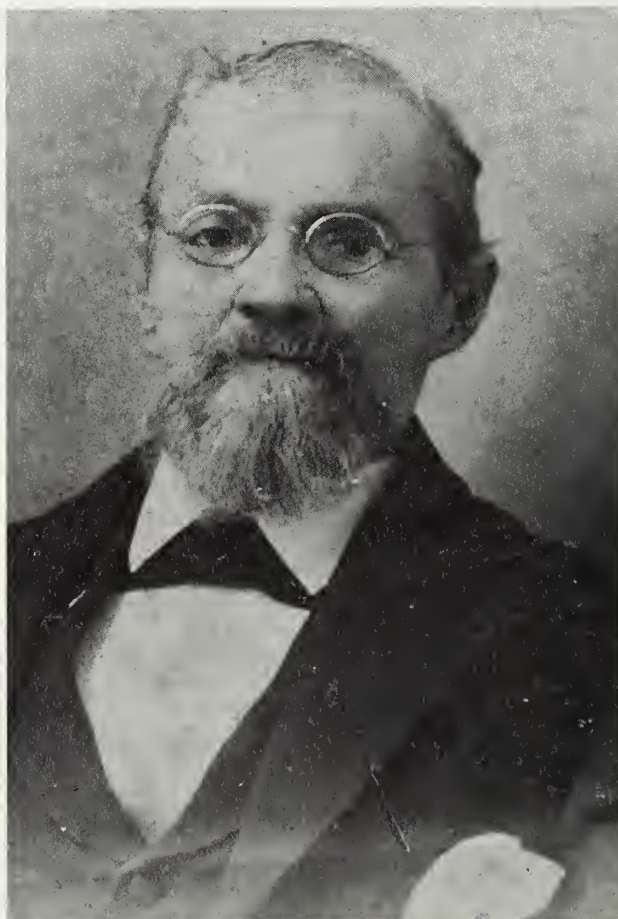
Only part of Elodie's alienation from Selma, Alabama, stemmed from her feud over the proper limits for criticizing her brother-in-law. Elodie considered herself a Kentuckian, and she had trouble all along developing any enthusiasm for her fiancée's home town in Alabama. She suffered agonies over Kentucky's reluctance to secede and join the other Confederate states. She delivered tongue-lashings to those Alabamans unlucky enough to criticize Kentucky in her pre-

sence, and she followed the career of Kentucky's John C. Breckinridge closely. Whether all the Todd children felt such an intense identification with their native state is an interesting question with interesting implications. Might Abraham Lincoln's Kentucky background have been more important to Mary Todd than we have previously realized?

EPILOGUE

N. H. R. Dawson reenlisted once his original term of service was up. He led a cavalry unit in the late part of the war. Elodie chided herself for her selfishness in wishing that he would stay home and realized that she must not interfere with her husband's sense of duty to Alabama and the Confederacy. Dawson must hardly ever have been at home in the early period of their marriage, for he attended sessions of the state legislature and led the cavalry when the legislature was in recess.

Mrs. Dawson made other adjustments to her husband's ways. She lived in Selma the rest of her life. She must also have made her peace with Mr. Dawson's interest in politics, for he never ceased to dabble in politics. She never repudiated her identification with Southern interests or her secessionist sympathies. She became a leader of the movement to erect a Confederate monument in Selma's Live Oak Cemetery. In fact, she defied her husband's dislike of female volunteer societies and became president of the Ladies' Memorial Association of Selma. One could not have predicted this assumption of leadership in Selma society in the period of her withdrawal from a society which had insulted a Todd brother-in-law. She bore N. H. R. Dawson two children. In 1877, she died and was buried near the Confederate monument she had helped to build.



Courtesy of J. Winston Coleman, Jr.

FIGURE 3. Dr. George Todd, the black sheep.



Lincoln Lore

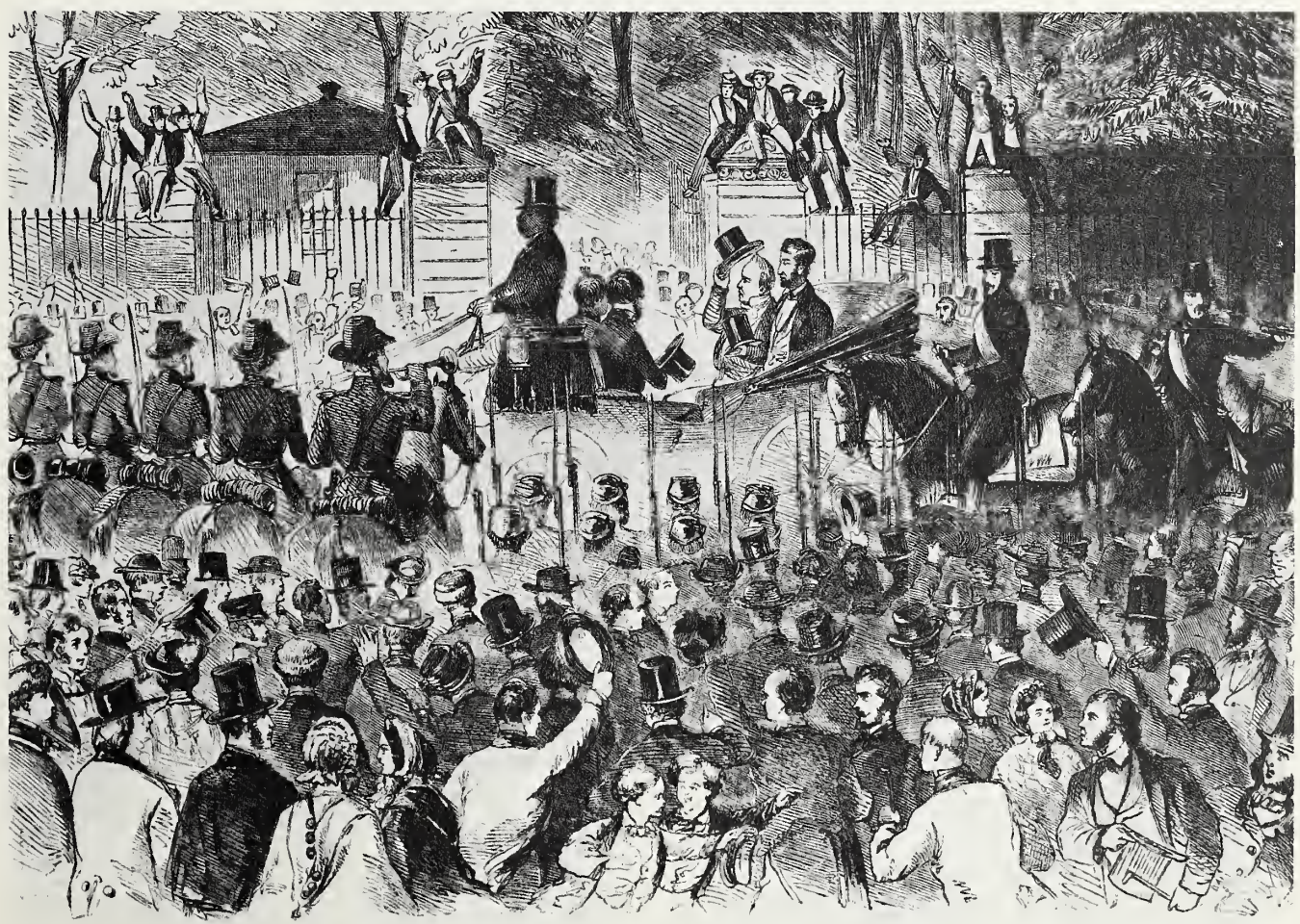
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Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
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July, 1978

FIVE EX-PRESIDENTS WATCHED THE LINCOLN ADMINISTRATION

Presidents who retire from office are expected to become "elder statesmen." Former President Richard M. Nixon seems currently to be bidding for that status by promising to speak occasionally "in non-political forums." He will stress foreign policy, he says, because partisanship is supposed to end at America's shores. He promises to be above the partisan battles of the day; he will become an elder statesman.

In Lincoln's day, Presidents who left office did not automatically assume the status of elder statesmen. The five surviving ex-Presidents in 1861 — Martin Van Buren, John Tyler,

Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce, and James Buchanan — did have enough reputation for being above the party battles for it to be suggested more than once that they meet to find remedies for the secession crisis. That such a meeting never took place is eloquent testimony to the weakness of the non-partisan ideal in the nineteenth century. The broad public did not regard these men — and the ex-Presidents did not regard each other — as passionless Nestors well on their way to becoming marble statues. They proved, in fact, to be fiercely partisan.



From the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Lincoln met two former Presidents shortly before his inauguration in 1861: Millard Fillmore greeted him in Buffalo, New York, and he met the incumbent, James Buchanan, twice in Washington. Reporters indicated that in both cases Lincoln chatted amiably, but no one knows the subjects of their conversations.

It was an irony that John Tyler came nearest to assuming an official status as a nonpartisan adjudicator in a conference meant to reconcile the sections, for he would later demonstrate the greatest partisan difference from the Lincoln administration of any of the former Presidents. By November of 1860, Tyler already thought it too late for a convocation of representatives of all the states to arrive at a compromise settlement which would save the Union. He did recommend a meeting of "border states" which would bear the brunt of any sectional war in the event a compromise was not reached. New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri could at least arrange a peaceful separation of the South if they could not keep the Union together. Tyler's proposal never bore fruit, but, when the Virginia General Assembly proposed a peace conference of all states in Washington for February, 1861, Tyler became one of Virginia's five commissioners at the convention. The delegates in Washington elected Tyler president of the conference unanimously, but the convention was so divided in voting on recommendations that it was largely ignored by Congress. Tyler returned to Virginia and became an advocate of secession. When urged to lead a compromise movement after the fall of Fort Sumter in the spring, Tyler thought it hopeless. Lincoln, he said, "having weighed in the scales the value of a mere local Fort against the value of the Union itself" had brought on "the very collision he well knew would arise whenever Fort Sumter was attempted to be reinforced or provisioned." In November, Tyler was elected to serve in the Confederate House of Representatives. Far from becoming an elder statesman, John Tyler played a role in destroying the nation which had once elected him Vice-President.

FIGURE 2. Millard Fillmore.

Millard Fillmore despised Republicans as threats to the Union he loved and had once helped to preserve (by supporting the Compromise of 1850). In the secession crisis, he felt that the burden lay upon Republicans to give "some assurance . . . that they . . . are ready and willing to . . . repeal all unconstitutional state laws; live up to the compromises of the Constitution, and . . . treat our Southern brethren as friends." Nevertheless, he disagreed with the cautious policy of lame-duck President James Buchanan, who felt that the government had no authority to "coerce a state." The men who passed ordinances of secession, Fillmore argued, should be "regarded as an unauthorized assembly of men conspiring to commit treason, and as such liable to be punished like any other unlawful assembly engaged in the same business."

Though no one knows how Fillmore voted in 1860, it is doubtful that he voted for Lincoln. It seemed awkward, there-

fore, when Fillmore was Lincoln's official host during his stay in Buffalo, New York, on the way to Washington for the inaugural ceremonies. Fillmore took him to the First Unitarian Church in the morning and at night to a meeting in behalf of Indians, but no one knows what they talked about.

When war broke out in April, Fillmore rallied quickly to the colors. Four days after the fall of Fort Sumter, the ex-President was speaking to a mass Union rally in Buffalo, saying that it was "no time now to inquire by whose fault or folly this state of things has been produced;" it was time for "every man to stand to his post, and . . . let posterity . . . find our skeleton and armor on the spot where duty required us to stand." He gave five hundred dollars for the support of families of volunteers and soon organized the Union Continentals, a company of men too old to fight. Enrolling Buffalo's older men of sub-

stance in the Union cause, the Continentals dressed in colorful uniforms, provided escorts for ceremonial and patriotic occasions, and provided leverage for procuring donations for the Union cause. Fearing British invasion through Canada to aid the Confederacy, Fillmore hounded the government to provide arms and men to protect the Niagara frontier.

Suddenly in February of 1864, Fillmore performed an abrupt about-face. In the opening address for the Great Central Fair of the Ladies Christian Commission in Buffalo, Fillmore rehearsed a catalogue of war-induced suffering and announced that "lasting peace" would come only when much was "forgiven, if not forgotten." When the war ended, the United States should restore the South "to all their rights under the Constitution." Republicans were outraged. The ex-President had turned a nonpartisan patriotic rally into a veiled criticism of the administration's conduct of the war.

Personally, Fillmore felt that the country was "on the verge of ruin." Without a change in the administration, he said, "we must soon end in national bankruptcy and military despotism." The ex-President, once a Whig and a Know-Nothing, endorsed Democrat George B. McClellan for the Presidency in 1864.

After Lincoln's assassination, Fillmore led the delegation which met the President's funeral train and escorted it to Buffalo. This did not expunge from Republican's memories Fillmore's partisan acts of 1864. Nor did it cool his dislike of Republicans. In 1869, he stated that it would be "a blessing to break the ranks of the corrupt proscription radical party, that now curses the country. Could moderate men of both parties unite in forming a new one . . . it would be well."

Among the five living ex-Presidents, none was more hostile to President Lincoln than Franklin Pierce. In 1860, he hoped



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that a united Democratic party would choose Southern candidate John C. Breckinridge. The New Hampshire Democrats endorsed Stephen A. Douglas instead, but Pierce went along with the decision, though without enthusiasm. Lincoln's election was, for this Democratic ex-President, a "distinct and unequivocal denial of the coequal rights" of the states. In a letter written on Christmas Eve, 1861, Pierce urged the South to delay action for six months. If the North did not right the wrongs done the South, then she could depart in peace.

It was hoped that all of the ex-Presidents might attend John Tyler's Washington Peace Conference. Pierce declined, saying that "the North have been the first wrong doers and [he had] never been able to see how a successful appeal could be made to the south without first placing [the North] right." After news of Fort Sumter's fall, however, he reconsidered and wrote ex-President Martin Van Buren, suggesting that Van Buren assemble the former Presidents in Philadelphia to resolve the crisis. He spoke in Concord, New Hampshire, urging the citizens "to stand together and uphold the flag." Van Buren declined to call the former Presidents together and suggested that Pierce himself should. The wind went out of the sails of the idea of an ex-Presidents' peace convention.

Soon, Pierce lost his enthusiasm for the war effort. He made a trip in the summer of 1861 to Michigan and Kentucky to visit old political friends. On Christmas Eve, he received a letter from Secretary of State William H. Seward, then in charge of the administration's political arrests, enclosing a letter from an anonymous source which accused Pierce of making his trip to promote membership in the Knights of the Golden Circle, "a secret league" whose object was "to overthrow the Government." Seward unceremoniously demanded an explanation from the former President of the United States. Pierce indignantly denied the charge, Seward quickly apologized, and it was soon discovered that Seward had fallen for a hoax. An opponent of the Republicans had written the letter to show how far the Republicans would go in their policy of crying "treason" at the slightest provocation.

Pierce sank into despair. He loathed the proscription of civil liberties in the North, detested emancipation, and saw the Lincoln administration as a despotic reign. The killing of white men for the sake of freeing black men was beyond his comprehension. He thought Lincoln a man of "limited ability and narrow intelligence" who was the mere tool of the abolitionists. He stopped short of endorsing the Southern cause. Old friends avoided him, but Pierce swore never to "justify, sustain, or in any way or to any extent uphold this cruel, heartless, aimless unnecessary war."

At a rally in Concord on July 4, 1863, Pierce courted martyrdom. "True it is," he said, "that I may be the next victim of unconstitutional, arbitrary, irresponsible power." He called efforts to maintain the Union by force of arms "futile" and said that only through "peaceful agencies" could it be saved. Pamphlets compared Pierce to Benedict Arnold, but he persisted and urged the Democratic party to adopt a platform in 1864 calling for restoring the Union by ceasing to fight. Republicans did not forget his actions. New Hampshire provided no public recognition of her son's public career for fifty years after the war.

Martin Van Buren, alone among the ex-Presidents, gave the Lincoln administration unwavering support. He refused Pierce's invitation to organize a meeting of ex-Presidents out of a desire not to be associated with James Buchanan, whose course during the secession crisis Van Buren despised. He had confidence in Lincoln, based probably on information he received from the Blair family, Montgomery Blair being a Republican and a member of Lincoln's cabinet.

There was no more interesting course pursued by an ex-President than James Buchanan's. He had more reason than any other to feel directly antagonistic to the Lincoln administration. Like Pierce, Buchanan had been accused by Lincoln in 1858 of conspiring with Stephen A. Douglas and Roger B. Taney to nationalize slavery in the United States. As Lincoln's immediate predecessor in the office, Buchanan had succeeded in his goal of avoiding war with the South until the new administration came in. The price of this success was the popular imputation of blame on the weak and vacillating course of the Buchanan administration for not nipping seces-

sion in the bud. It was commonly asserted that Buchanan conspired with secessionists to let the South out of the Union. Lincoln's Vice-President Hannibal Hamlin, for example, felt that the Buchanan administration "connives at acts of treason at the South." Despite the findings of a Congressional investigation, many persisted in the belief that the administration had allowed a disproportionate share of arms to flow to Southern arsenals and a dangerously large amount of money to remain in Southern mints. When war broke out, feelings were so strong against Buchanan that he required a guard from the local Masonic Lodge in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to protect his home, Wheatland, from vandalism and himself from personal injury. President Lincoln did not help Buchanan's plight when, in his message of July 4, 1861, he charged that he found the following upon entering office: a "disproportionate share, of the Federal muskets and rifles" in Southern armories, money in Southern mints, the "Navy . . . scattered in distant seas," and Fort Pickens incapable of reinforcement because of "some *quasi* armistice of the late administration."

Such charges rankled Buchanan, and he spent much of the war years in a careful but quiet attempt to amass documentation which would refute the charges. By late 1862, he had written a book which accomplished this task (to his satisfaction, at least), but he delayed publication until 1866 "to avoid the possible imputation . . . that any portion of it was intended to embarrass Mr. Lincoln's administration." Buchanan's friend Jeremiah Black had doubted that Buchanan could defend his own administration without attacking Lincoln's:

It is vain to think that the two administrations can be made consistent. The fire upon the Star of the West was as bad as the fire on Fort Sumter; and the taking of Fort Moultrie & Pinckney was worse than either. If this war is right and politic and wise and constitutional, I cannot but think you ought to have made it.

Despite the many reasons for which Buchanan might have opposed the Lincoln administration, the ex-President did not. As far as he was concerned, the seceding states "chose to commence civil war, & Mr. Lincoln had no alternative but to defend the country against dismemberment. I certainly should have done the same thing had they begun the war in my time, & this they well knew." Buchanan did not think the war unconstitutional, and he repeatedly told Democrats that it was futile to demand peace proposals. He also supported the draft.

Buchanan considered it too late in 1864 for the Democrats to argue that Lincoln had changed the war's aims. He was pleased to see that McClellan, the Democratic candidate, thought so too. Lincoln's victory in the election, which Buchanan equated with the dubious honor of winning an elephant, caused Buchanan to think that the President should give a "frank and manly offer to the Confederates that they might return to the Union just as they were before." The ex-President's political views were as clearly nostalgic and indifferent to emancipation as those of any Democrat, but he was not among those Democrats who criticized the war or the measures Lincoln used to fight it.

Buchanan spoke of Lincoln in complimentary language. He thought him "a man of honest heart & true manly feelings." Lincoln was "patriotic," and Buchanan deemed his assassination "a terrible misfortune." The two men had met twice when Lincoln came to Washington to assume the Presidency, and Buchanan recalled the meetings fondly, remembering Lincoln's "kindly and benevolent heart and . . . plain, sincere and frank manners." When the Lincoln funeral train passed through Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Buchanan watched it from his buggy.

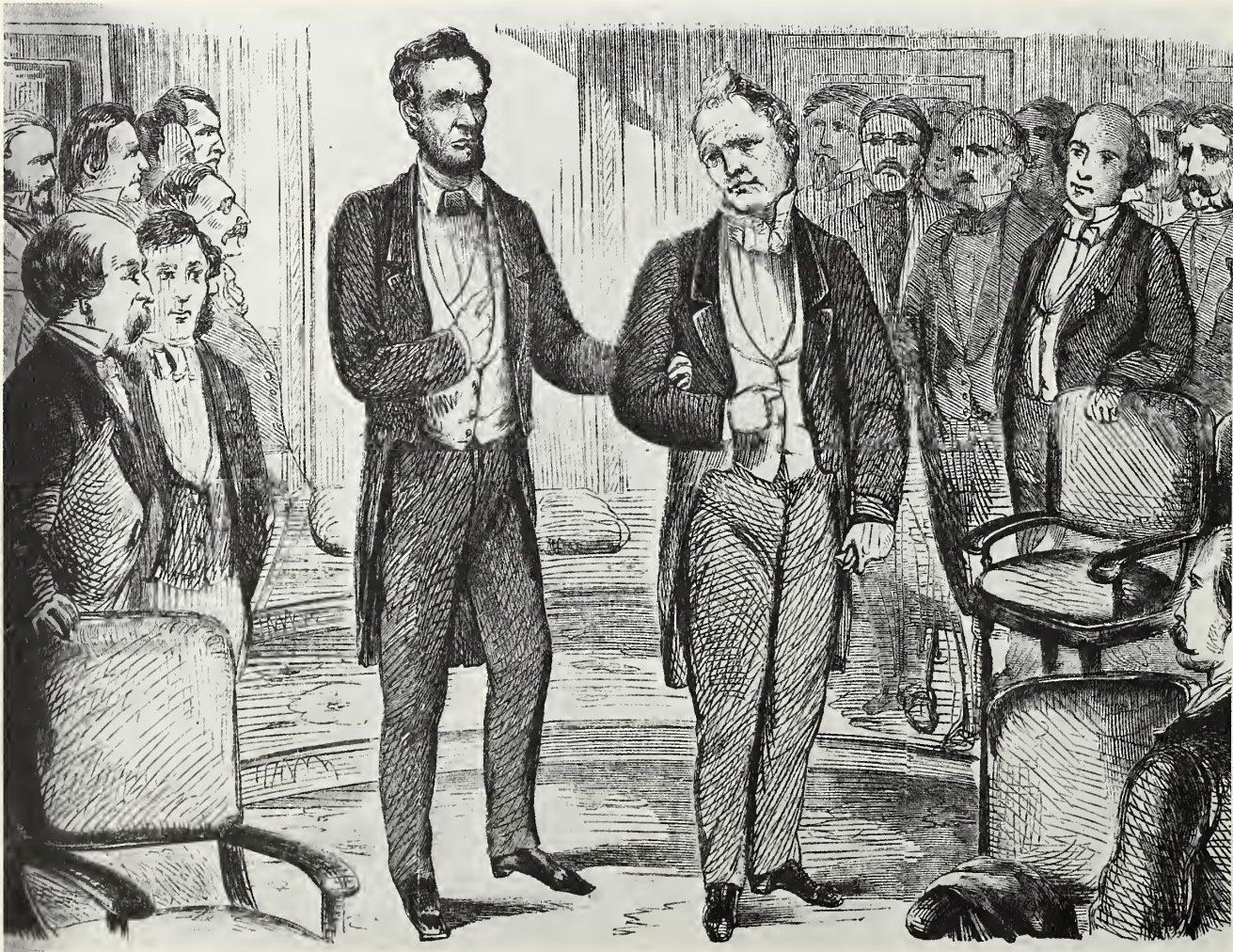
The ex-Presidents benefitted from the Revisionism of historians like James G. Randall. It was their work which rectified the generations-old charge that Buchanan trifled with treason. In some cases, however, this has been a distorting force. Randall's *Lincoln the President: Midstream* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1952) gives the reader an extremely sympathetic portrait of Franklin Pierce in keeping with Randall's view that most Democrats more truly represented Lincoln's views than his fellow Republicans. Thus Pierce appears as the victim of Seward's misguided zeal in the affair of the Knights of

the Golden Circle hoax and, in a particularly touching moment, as the friendly consoler of a bereaved father in the White House. In a horrible train accident immediately before entering the Presidency, Pierce and his wife had witnessed the death of their young son mangled in the wreckage of their car. Therefore, when Willie Lincoln died in 1862, ex-President Pierce sent a letter offering condolences. This is all one learns of Franklin Pierce in Randall's volumes on Lincoln's administration. It is useful to know of his partisan opposition to Lincoln and the war as well, and it in no way detracts from the magnanimity of his letter of condolence. If anything, it serves to highlight the personal depth of feeling Pierce must have felt for the Lincolns in their time of personal bereavement; it allows us even better to appreciate him as a man as well as a politician.

It is easy to forget that Presidents are men. This look at the ex-Presidents of Lincoln's day is a reminder that these men retained their personal and partisan views of the world. It would be hard to imagine an ex-President's club. Van Buren would have nothing to do with Buchanan, though both had been Democrats. Van Buren took the popular view that Buchanan was a "dough face" who truckled to the South instead of standing up to it as Andrew Jackson had done during the Nullification crisis. John Tyler remained a Virginian at heart and cast his fortunes with secession and against the country of which he had been President. Franklin Pierce and Millard Fillmore, the one a Democrat and the other a Whig in their prime,

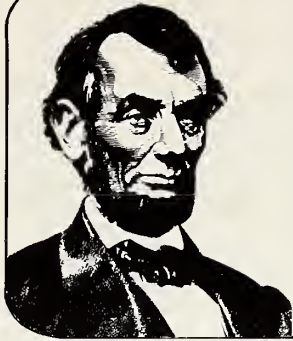
retained a dislike of the Republican party. Fillmore supported the war with vigor but came to despair of the effort through suspicion that the Republican administration mishandled it. Pierce always blamed the war on Republican provocation and came quickly, and not without some provocation from the administration, to oppose the war effort bitterly. Ironically, James Buchanan, who labored under the heaviest burden of charges of Southern sympathies, was the least critical of the administration of any of the ex-Presidents except Martin Van Buren. Critical of Republican war aims like the rest, Buchanan, nevertheless, supported the war effort and maintained a high personal regard for his Presidential successor. Buchanan thus approached the twentieth-century ideal of an elder statesman.

Editor's Note: The Presidents of Lincoln's era have been rather well served by their biographers. Two splendid examples are Roy F. Nichols's *Franklin Pierce: Young Hickory of the Granite Hills* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958) and Philip Shriver Klein's *President James Buchanan: A Biography* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1962). Robert J. Rayback's *Millard Fillmore: Biography of a President* (Buffalo: Buffalo Historical Society, 1959) and Robert Seager, II's *And Tyler Too: A Biography of John & Julia Gardiner Tyler* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963) are useful. There is no careful study of Martin Van Buren's later life. The sketches of these Presidents here are based on these volumes.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. Lincoln and Buchanan did not meet again after this day.



Lincoln Lore

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Number 1694

The Confederacy As A Revolutionary Experience

by John David Smith

Lincoln doubtless faced overwhelming trials as President, but these pale in contrast to those confronted by his Southern rival, Jefferson Davis. Not only did Davis lead a revolution and establish a new nation, but he was called upon to fight a modern, total war, direct foreign policy, and maintain the spirit of Southerners for their cause. Regardless of whatever "natural" advantages the Confederates may have had — the revolutionary zeal of patriots for a new republic, the benefit of fighting a defensive war on native soil, the ability to draw on short interior lines of communication and supply — their opponents held the upper hand in those areas which really counted: men, materiel, industrial capacity, and organization.

What's more, Davis forged the Confederate nation from scratch. After secession he molded eleven sovereign state-republics, preindustrial in outlook and ever sensitive to their individual states' rights, into a confederacy, a federation with a surprisingly strong central government. Lincoln, on the other hand, inherited the reins of a country with years of experience in being a nation, and with all the administrative and industrial machinery to wage war. The early successes of the infant Confederacy were not lost on England's Chancellor of the Exchequer, William Gladstone. Speaking on the Confederacy at Newcastle in October, 1862, Gladstone's remarks were music to Davis's ears. In slightly more than a year and one-half, explained the Englishman, "Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they have made what is more than either, they have made a nation."

Although few historians have articulated it in these terms, the central theme of Confederate historiography is, and always has been, Confederate nationalism. Soon after Appomattox, architects of the myth of the "Lost Cause," men like Edward Pollard, Alexander Stephens, and Davis

himself, offered explanations, denunciations, and rationalizations for Confederate defeat. Despite their self-serving chauvinism and partisanship, these early writers raised salient questions about the nature of the Confederate experiment. States' rights, centralization, faulty leadership, economic backwardness, state socialism, foreign recognition, disaffection on the homefront — these and innumerable other elements of Confederate strength and weakness have attracted later generations of trained historians. Writing in 1925, for example, historian Frank Lawrence Owsley charged that the Confederacy died from an overdose of states' rights theory. In reality, though, Owsley and numerous other students of the subject have all along been probing the Confederacy as a national experience.

In his new volume on the Confederacy, *The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979 [*The New American Nation Series*]), Emory M. Thomas focuses squarely on Confederate nationhood. Thomas, a historian at the University of Georgia, is no neophyte to Confederate historiography. His first book, *The Confederate State of Richmond* (1971), is a pioneer work in Confederate urban history, a biography of the South's capital as an embattled city-state. In addition to numerous articles and a textbook on the Civil War, Thomas established his credentials as a historian of the Confederacy in 1971 with the publication of *The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience*. This provocative speculative essay argues that the Southland underwent a dual revolution in its transformation from the Old South to the Confederate South. On one level the Confederacy symbolized an external "revolt against Yankee ways and a Yankee Union." But the revolution got out of hand and surpassed the goals of even the most rabid Southern revolutionaries. It ushered in an internal revolution, one which altered substantially the warp and woof of Southern life.



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FIGURE 1. The Great Seal of the Confederate States of America. In their political rhetoric Confederate Southerners honored the Founding Fathers. They perceived themselves as heirs to the revolutionary tradition of Washington and Jefferson. Confederates stressed their devotion to the true principles of American democracy, principles, they argued, which had been distorted under Northern misrule. The Confederate seal was designed by Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin and was adopted by the Confederate Congress in May, 1863. Significantly, it showed an equestrian portrait of George Washington (after the statue of Washington which surmounts the Capitol Square at Richmond), surrounded by a wreath of the South's agricultural staples — cotton, tobacco, sugar cane, corn, and wheat.

Thomas's latest book draws upon the concept of a dual revolution to explain Confederate nationalism from secession in 1860 and 1861 to submission in 1865. Like many historians of the South before him, Thomas emphasizes Southern distinctiveness, individualism, localism, and conservatism. He interprets secession as a means for Southerners "to define themselves as a people and to act out a national identity." "The essential fact of the Confederate experience," writes Thomas, "was that a sufficient number of white Southern Americans felt more Southern than American or, perhaps more accurately, that they were orthodox Americans and Northerners were apostates. Southern sectionalism became Southern nationalism and underwent trial by war."

One of the great ironies of Southern history is that secession — the region's external revolution — was essentially a conservative act. Southerners severed the Union and precipitated civil war in order to preserve and protect unique Southern institutions from encroachment. Although such root-and-branch radicals as Edmund Ruffin, Robert Barnwell Rhett, and William Lowndes Yancey had fueled the impulse for secession, the fire-eaters lost control of the Montgomery Convention and became mere "ornaments in the Confederate body politic." In their stead emerged moderate tacticians, men like Jefferson Davis and Alexander Stephens. These "sensible secessionists" envisioned themselves as nineteenth-century heirs to the revolutionary tradition of America's Founding Fathers.

The Confederacy's first heroes were George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Both men were good Southerners, but better yet, great Americans. Confederate Southerners wished not to repudiate their historic ties with the American experience. Rather, they celebrated the American past and decided only reluctantly to leave the Union. Dragging forth Washington and Jefferson as models, Confederate leaders believed that they too were justified in dissolving a Lockean compact by force.

Implicit in Thomas's analysis of the Confederate revolution are themes examined first by historian Bernard Bailyn in his authoritative research into the ideological cradles of the American Revolution. Just as the revolutionaries of 1776 claimed that George III's colonial policies had perverted the spirit of the English constitution, the Confederate revolutionaries of 1861 charged that Northerners were destroying the principles of American representative government. The Confederates revolted *not* because of any dislike for the American Constitution, but because they held it so dear and detested the manner in which it was being distorted under Northern leadership. Significantly, in spite of their numerous allusions to the Founding Fathers, the Confederates never proposed America's only real precedent for confederation, the Articles of Confederation.

The Confederate Constitution illustrates well the essential conservatism of the South's external revolution. Whereas radical states' rightists favored a constitution designed to extend and intensify the slaveholders' ideology, "safe," moderate voices prevailed. The resulting document, the Confederate Constitution, was less Southern than American in origin. In most respects it resembled the very Federal Constitution which the secessionists had allegedly repudiated. Curiously, for example, the founding fathers of the new planters' republic refused to provide for the re-opening of the African slave trade. Thomas sees their conservatism as the Confederates' foremost characteristic. After secession, he writes, the "Confederates did not believe they needed to make new worlds; they were more than content with the world they already had." Their fundamental goal was not a break with the past, but rather the preservation of the Southern status quo.

War, however, altered drastically the entire nature of the Confederate experiment. After the attack upon Fort Sumter, Southern leaders no longer could speak in idealistic terms of a peaceful separation from the Union or of the Confederacy as simply an alternative nationality. War placed such strains on the fabric of the Confederacy that it occasioned the radical, internal revolt which ultimately rocked the Southern ship of state from its moorings.

The seeds of the internal Confederate revolution lay first in the outbreak of war, and second in the Confederate Constitution itself. The preamble to that document spoke both of the Confederate States acting in their "sovereign and independent character," and of a "permanent federal government." Delegates to the Confederate Constitutional Convention in Montgomery were not unaware of the potential dilemma

posed by a clash of state and Confederate rights. But rather than confront the problem, they "were satisfied to affirm state sovereignty in general terms and trust future generations to understand the meaning of the phrase." War, however, made the future the present. Designed to function during peacetime, the loose confederation of Southern states faltered terribly after the Confederacy's initial victory at Manassas.

Better than any previous historian, Thomas places the string of Confederate military setbacks and bungled campaigns, July, 1861-April, 1862, into the context of Confederate nationalism. During the early months of 1862 the Confederacy was clearly foundering as a result of its commitment to states' rights. "Southerners," writes Thomas, "had tried to act like a nation and had failed." During the first year of its existence as a nation, the Confederacy "had been an incarnation of the Old South, and as such the Old South had been tried and found wanting. Southerners found that Confederate national survival and rigid adherence to ante-bellum Southern ideology were mutually exclusive. The ante-bellum South could not metamorphose into the 'bellum' South without some fundamental alterations in its cherished way of life."

Thomas credits Jefferson Davis's positive and creative leadership with holding the key to Confederate survival for three additional years. With the support of the Confederate Congress, the President initiated a series of novel steps which transformed Davis's nation from a land steeped in the traditions of the Old South, to a revolutionary Confederate South, "distinct from the Souths that came before and after." During this second phase of the Southern revolt, the locus of Confederate power was in Richmond, no longer in eleven provincial state houses. The war against the Yankee invaders was conducted on a national level with strong centralized leadership provided by the President. Centralization, a sharp move away from states' rights and the ethos of the individual, became the Confederate way of life after 1862. Not only did the Davis regime come to control the South's military-agricultural-industrial complex, but it taxed, impressed supplies and laborers, and regulated foreign trade. Davis and the Confederate government even resorted to such infringements of personal liberties as the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*, the power to declare martial law, and conscription. In 1865, as a last ditch effort to provide men for the South's decimated armies, Congress authorized the arming of blacks as soldiers. Their willingness to sacrifice slavery — the South's sacred cow and cornerstone of the region's socio-economic system — revealed just how far Confederate nationalism had changed in the course of the war. Davis's all-consuming quest for Southern independence, Confederate self-determination, led the President to repudiate many of the principles upon which his new nation had been founded. Equally important, the Confederacy's internal revolt forced changes in almost every aspect of Southern national life.

One of the most dramatic areas of social change within the Confederacy was the impact of the war on the master-slave relationship. Thomas draws heavily on Eugene D. Genovese's view of slavery as a seigniorial institution. It was a system of interdependency whereby the slaveholder depended upon the bondsman for labor and deference, and the slave upon his owner for paternal mastery and support. This reciprocal relationship may or may not have been stable during peacetime, but it unquestionably experienced severe strains during the Confederate war. Several forces worked to weaken the bonds between master and slave and, in turn, undermined the peculiar institution.

First, many masters served in the Confederate Army and their absence led to an overall decrease in white hegemony on the South's farms and plantations. "Substitute masters" — planters' wives, the elderly, overseers, and children — failed to provide the slaves with paternal control and, consequently, commanded less obedience from the slaves. Wartime shortages, the impressment of slaves, the presence of Union armies in rural districts, and the dramatic increase in the number of slaves in Southern cities also upset the traditional role of the master.

The exceptional circumstances of war prevented the planter from assuming the role of provider and master of all situations. As masters acted less like masters, slaves acted less like slaves. Thomas presents excellent case studies of the subtle and complex ways in which slavery changed under the pressures of war. Throughout the South, bondsmen began to break their chains either by running away or by less overt

means such as disrespectful or impudent behavior. Incredulous planters suffered considerable pain as they watched helplessly their social system, and their world, crumble about them. On the question of slave resistance, Thomas is extremely careful not to distort his evidence. Slaves, in fact *did* fight against the Confederacy by assisting runaways and Union troops. In doing so they were working out their own liberation. On the other hand, though, the slaves never rose *en masse* against their captors. Some even exhibited paternalism, guarded their masters, and thus reversed the master-slave roles.

Thomas's analysis of black Confederates is but one of numerous strengths in his excellent book. The volume is exhaustively researched and gracefully written. Its conclusions are in the main carefully reasoned. The footnotes bristle with references to the latest Confederate scholarship and the book's fifty-page bibliography is the most comprehensive enumeration of Confederate historiography in print. Only one recent major work, James L. Roark's *Masters Without Slaves* (New York, 1977), is omitted.

Thomas surveys all phases of the Confederate experience—administrative, cultural, diplomatic, and military—in such a judicious manner that none seems disproportionate in emphasis. This is especially true of his superb military accounts which are analytical and insightful, not mere rehashes of well-known Civil War engagements.

Perhaps Thomas's greatest strength as a historian is his uncanny ability to penetrate below the surface of complex issues and render balanced judgments. When analyzing the Confederacy's offensive-defensive strategy, for example, he makes the important point that the measure of Confederate nationhood was not achieving military victory, but rather avoiding defeat. Endurance was the key to Confederate nationalism. Every day the Confederate government survived offered undeniable proof of Southern independence and the success of Davis's conservative revolt.

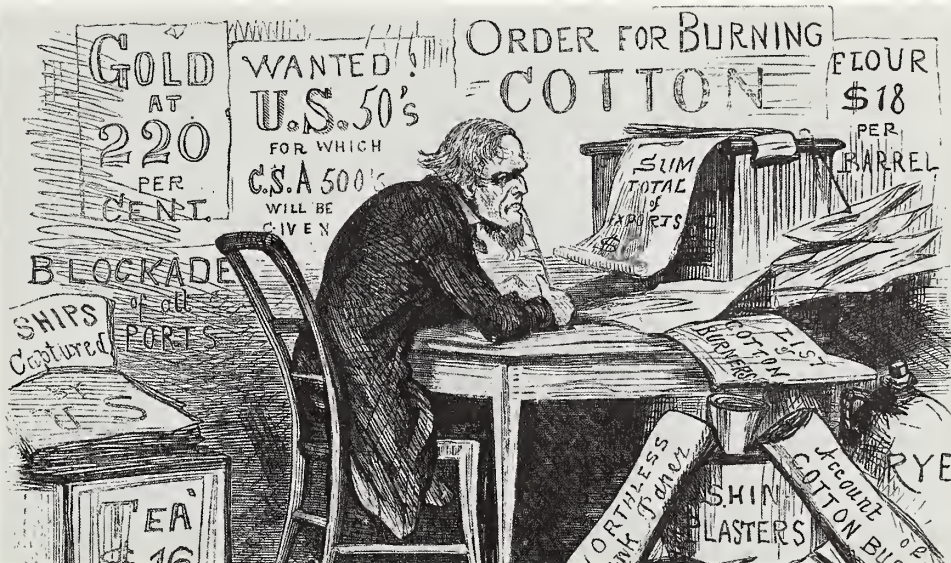
He also offers just appraisals of two of the Confederacy's most maligned figures: Treasury Secretary Christopher G. Memminger and Davis himself. Both men were criticized in their day by disgruntled Confederate editors and politicians. Through the years historians have heaped much of the blame for Southern defeat on their shoulders. Thomas, however, is sympathetic in his treatment of them. Memminger, he argues, was a victim of Confederate circumstance. Although the South Carolinian favored a system of direct taxation from the start, his wishes were stymied by the overwhelming financial needs of the new nation and the innate conservatism of states' rights ideology. Cognizant of "the folly of unsupported paper money," Memminger tried repeatedly to retire large quantities of Southern paper currency and thereby arrest inflation. The task, concludes Thomas, simply was too great.

His positive assessment of Davis is in line with the recent biography of the man by Clement Eaton and with Paul D. Escott's important new book, *After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978). The new scholarship on Davis, while not eulogizing him as Hudson Strode did in his multi-volume biography, emphasizes the President's dedication, intelligence, and considerable flexibility. Although in many ways Davis remains a sphinx, historians no longer view him totally as an icy, snappish, doctrinaire constitutionalist.

What impresses Thomas most about Davis was the Mississippian's unflagging commitment to Confederate self-determination. Yet by February, 1865, when the Confederate Congress expressed its lack of confidence in his leadership,

the cause was already lost. "Davis," explains Thomas, "had tried to unify military command in himself, and although he had done so to a greater degree than his enemies, the Southern President had failed as a war leader, if only because he was losing the war." Even after Richmond had fallen, however, Davis refused to succumb to defeat and was ready to take to the hills to lead a guerilla war. The author notes that Davis's plan to fight till the end "reversed the normal pattern of guerilla operations and envisioned a transition from regular forces to partisans instead of the other way around." But an unconventional, irregular war proved unacceptable to a people who had already given so much of themselves in four years of strife. Southerners, concludes Thomas, were unprepared to offer "the ultimate sacrifice: that of themselves and their fundamental attachment to people and place."

Thomas undoubtedly is correct. There were limits to the lengths Southerners would go to win independence. But he merely speculates when he argues that the Confederates held a greater attachment to hearth and kin than did the Yankees. There simply is no way to prove or disprove an assertion such as this: "Confederates were conditioned to look upon land as the basis of wealth and social status. The culture of the Southern folk required a stable community of landholders." Could not the same sentences be applied to Northerners? Antebellum Northerners and Southerners worshiped land. In



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FIGURE 2. In his new book Emory M. Thomas sympathizes with the impossible fiscal problems faced by Confederate Treasury Secretaries Christopher G. Memminger and George Trenholm. This anti-Confederate cartoon appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, September 6, 1862, p. 576. It is clearly unsympathetic to Jefferson Davis's economic woes.

this respect, at least, the Southerner was an American, not a Southerner *sui generis*.

Thomas's thesis stems from David M. Potter's interpretation of Southern distinctiveness which appeared in the *Yale Review* almost twenty years ago. In "The Enigma of the South," Potter wrote that the South's "culture of the folk" was the region's most identifiable trait. According to Potter, historically "the relation between the land and the people remained more direct and more primal in the South than in other parts of the country." Potter, one of the most careful and distinguished historians of the South, advanced this thesis as one possible answer to a vexing enigma, not as dogma. Thomas, however, applies Potter's tentative explanation of Southernism uncritically and weds it to his own interpretation of Southern individualism.

Thomas's emphasis upon the individualism of Southerners and their unique characteristics leads him to make some provocative, though not completely defensible, arguments. Not only is this true of his treatment of the Confederacy's cultural and intellectual history, but of its military and economic history as well. The author's description of Pickett's assault on the Union center at Gettysburg is a good case in point. According to Thomas, the charge was "a gallant disaster. In a way it was the entire Confederate war in microcosm — a

gathering of clans instead of military organizations[,] led by an officer corps distinguished by its eccentricities, marching forth with bands playing and flags flying to take a gamble justified largely by the size of the stakes." Aside from the fact that Thomas fails to develop the ideas implicit in the terms "clans" and "eccentricities," might not similar words be used to describe the actions of Burnside and his Union troops at the Battle of Fredericksburg?

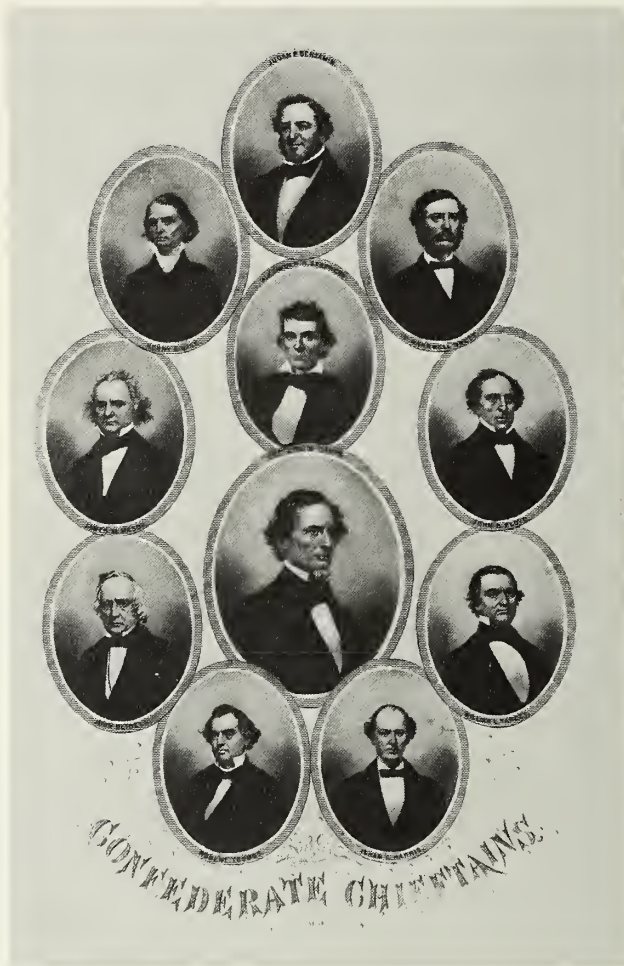
In another instance, an interesting analysis of the Confederacy's industrialists, Thomas espouses the distinctiveness of the South's captains of industry. Employing Antonio Gramsci's distinctions between types of intellectuals, Thomas argues that the leaders of the South's war industries "were hardly entrepreneurs whose acquisitive instincts fit the Yankee stereotype. On the contrary, the South's war industrialists tended to be 'traditional intellectuals' — school teachers, natural philosophers, and military scientists — as opposed to 'organic intellectuals' — industrial managers, mechanical engineers, and the like." His point would be far more convincing had Thomas examined the antebellum backgrounds of a large number of Confederate industrialists. Instead, he analyzed the postbellum careers of but five figures, too small a sample from which to draw overall conclusions. A real test of Thomas's hypothesis would have been the sort of collective biographical research conducted recently by Maury Klein into Northern Civil War industrialists.

Thomas's treatment of Confederate economic history raises additional questions as well. First, throughout his volume the author equates "preindustrial" with "precapitalist." Eugene



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FIGURE 3. In the waning days of the Civil War some Confederates proposed granting dictatorial powers to General Robert E. Lee. One of the South's most beloved figures, Lee joined the Confederate Army reluctantly, only after his native state, Virginia, had seceded.

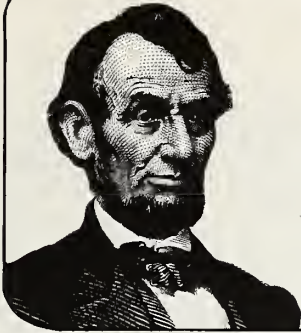


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FIGURE 4. A Mississippi planter, Jefferson Davis surrounded himself with fellow members of the Southern elite. In the process he alienated the South's plain folk.

D. Genovese's important scholarship notwithstanding, cannot a region such as the Old South be simultaneously agricultural and still capitalist? Given Thomas's use of these terms, the Old North — largely agricultural but more industrialized than the Old South — would be precapitalist too. Part of Thomas's problem is that Confederate agriculture (the same may be said for Confederate religion) has not received the careful attention from scholars which it deserves. Students, for example, must test his conclusion that "The Confederates sustained themselves industrially better than they did agriculturally and far better than they had any reason to expect in 1861." Much more also needs to be learned about the economic condition of the Southern masses during the war. Although Thomas does not neglect consideration of the ordinary Confederates, the nonslaveholding yeomen and urban dwellers, our knowledge of this majority of Southerners is thin. Paul D. Escott's new book is a major step in the right direction. According to Escott, President Davis's greatest blunder was his insensitivity to the economic problems of the South's plain folk. Limited by his states' rights critics and his upper class perspective, the Confederate chief executive proved unable "to create the internal unity and spirit essential for the growth of Confederate nationalism."

Despite these strictures, Thomas has produced the best book on the Confederacy to appear in years. This is no mean feat because such outstanding Southern historians as E. Merton Coulter, Clement Eaton, Charles P. Roland, and Frank E. Vandiver have contributed valuable monographs on the subject. Thomas brings a mastery of the sources and a keen analytical mind to the task. He has established himself as the foremost interpreter of the Confederacy, the South's national experience.



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Number 1703

LINCOLN AND SLAVERY: AN OVERVIEW

Abraham Lincoln was a native of a slave state, Kentucky. In 1811 Hardin County, where Lincoln was born two years before, contained 1,007 slaves and 1,627 white males above the age of sixteen. His father's brother Mordecai owned a slave. His father's Uncle Isaac may have owned over forty slaves. The Richard Berry family, with whom Lincoln's mother Nancy Hanks lived before her marriage to Thomas Lincoln, owned slaves. Thomas and Nancy Lincoln, however, were members of a Baptist congregation which had separated from another church because of opposition to slavery. This helps explain Lincoln's statement in 1864 that he was "naturally anti-slavery" and could "not remember when I did not so think, and feel." In 1860 he claimed that his father left Kentucky for Indiana's free soil "partly on account of slavery."

Nothing in Lincoln's political career is inconsistent with his claim to have been "naturally anti-slavery." In 1836, when resolutions came before the Illinois House condemning abolitionism, declaring that the Constitution sanctified the right of property in slaves, and denying the right of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, Lincoln was one of six to vote against them (seventy-seven voted in favor). Near the end of the term, March 3, 1837, Lincoln and fellow Whig Dan Stone wrote a protest against the resolutions which stated that "the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy." It too denounced abolitionism as more likely to exacerbate than abate the evils of slavery and asserted the right of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia (though the right should not be exercised without the consent of the District's citizens). Congress, of course, had no right to interfere with slavery in the states. In 1860 Lincoln could honestly point to the consistency of his antislavery convictions over the last twenty-three years. That early protest "briefly defined his position on the slavery question; and so far as it goes, it was then the same that it is now."

In his early political career in the 1830s and 1840s, Lincoln had faith in the benign operation of American political institutions. Though "opposed to slavery" throughout the period,

he "rested in the hope and belief that it was in course of ultimate extinction." For that reason, it was only "a minor question" to him. For the sake of keeping the nation together, Lincoln thought it "a paramount duty" to leave slavery in the states alone. He never spelled out the basis of his faith entirely, but he had confidence that the country was ever seeking to approximate the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. All men would be free when slavery, restricted to the areas where it already existed, exhausted the soil, became unprofitable, and was abolished by the slave-holding states themselves or perhaps by numerous individual emancipations. Reaching this goal, perhaps by the end of the century, required of dutiful politicians only "that we should never knowingly lend ourselves directly or indirectly, to prevent . . . slavery from dying a natural death — to find new places for it to live in, when it can no longer exist in the old." This statement, made in 1845, expressed Lincoln's lack of

concern over the annexation of Texas, where slavery already existed. As a Congressman during the Mexican War, Lincoln supported the Wilmot Proviso because it would prevent the growth of slavery in parts of the Mexican cession where the institution did not already exist. He still considered slavery a "distracting" question, one that might destroy America's experiment in popular government if politicians were to "enlarge and aggravate" it either by seeking to expand slavery or to attack it in the states.

Lincoln became increasingly worried around 1850 when he read John C. Calhoun's denunciations of the Declaration of Independence. When he read a similar denunciation by a Virginia clergyman, he grew more upset. Such things undermined his confidence because they showed that some Americans did not wish to approach the ideals of the Declaration of Independence; for some, they were no longer ideals at all. But these were the statements of a society directly interested in the preservation of the institution, and Lincoln did not become enough alarmed to aggravate the slave question. He began even to lose interest in politics.

The passage of Stephen A. Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act



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FIGURE 1. Like many other prints of Lincoln published soon after his death, this one celebrated the Emancipation Proclamation as his greatest act.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Charles Eberstadt noted fifty-two printed editions of the Emancipation Proclamation issued between 1862 and 1865. He called this one a “highly spirited Western edition embellished with four large slave scenes lithographed at the left and four freedom scenes at the right.”

in 1854 changed all this. Lincoln was startled when territory previously closed to slavery was opened to the possibility of its introduction by local vote. He was especially alarmed at the fact that this change was led by a Northerner with no direct interest in slavery to protect.

In 1841 Lincoln had seen a group of slaves on a steamboat being sold South from Kentucky to a harsher (so he assumed) slavery. Immediately after the trip, he noted the irony of their seeming contentment with their lot. They had appeared to be the happiest people on board. After the Kansas-Nebraska Act, he wrote about the same episode, still vivid to him, as "a continual torment to me." Slavery, he said, "has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable."

Lincoln repeatedly stated that slaveholders were no worse than Northerners would be in the same situation. Having inherited an undesirable but socially explosive political institution, Southerners made the best of a bad situation. Like all Americans before the Revolution, they had denounced Great Britain's forcing slavery on the colonies with the slave trade, and, even in the 1850s, they admitted the humanity of the Negro by despising those Southerners who dealt with the Negro as property, pure and simple — slave traders. But he feared that the ability of Northerners to see that slavery was morally wrong was in decline. This, almost as surely as disunion, could mean the end of the American experiment in freedom, for any argument for slavery which ignored the moral wrong of the institution could be used to enslave any man, white or black. If lighter men were to enslave darker men, then "you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with a fairer skin than your own." If superior intellect determined masters, then "you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with an intellect superior to your own." Once the moral distinction between slavery and freedom were forgotten, nothing could stop its spread. It was "founded in the selfishness of man's nature," and that selfishness could overcome any barriers of climate or geography.

By 1856 Lincoln was convinced that the "sentiment in favor of white slavery . . . prevailed in all the slave state papers, except those of Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri and Maryland." The people of the South had "an immediate palpable and immensely great pecuniary interest" in the question; "while, with the people of the North, it is merely an abstract question of moral right." Unfortunately, the latter formed a looser bond than economic self-interest in two billion dollars worth of slaves. And the Northern ability to resist was steadily undermined by the moral indifference to slavery epitomized by Douglas's willingness to see slavery voted up or down in the territories. The Dred Scott decision in 1857 convinced Lincoln that the Kansas-Nebraska Act had been the beginning of a conspiracy to make slavery perpetual, national, and universal. His House-Divided Speech of 1858 and his famous debates with Douglas stressed the specter of a conspiracy to nationalize slavery.

Lincoln's claims in behalf of the slaves were modest and did not make much of the Negro's abilities outside of slavery. The Negro "is not my equal . . . in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment," Lincoln said, but "in the right to put into his mouth the bread that his own hands have earned, he is the equal of every other man, white or black." Lincoln objected to slavery primarily because it violated the doctrine of the equality of all men announced in the Declaration of Independence. "As I would not be a *slave*, so I would not be a *master*," Lincoln said. "This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy."

Lincoln had always worked on the assumption that the Union was more important than abolishing slavery. As long as the country was approaching the ideal of freedom for all men, even if it took a hundred years, it made no sense to destroy the freest country in the world. When it became apparent to Lincoln that the country might not be approaching that ideal, it somewhat confused his thinking. In 1854 he admitted that as "Much as I hate slavery, I would consent to the extension of it rather than see the Union dissolved, just as I would consent to any GREAT evil, to avoid a GREATER one." As his fears of a conspiracy to nationalize

slavery increased, he ceased to make such statements. In the secession crisis he edged closer toward making liberty more important than Union. In New York City on February 20, 1861, President-elect Lincoln said:

There is nothing that can ever bring me willingly to consent to the destruction of this Union, under which . . . the whole country has acquired its greatness, unless it were to be that thing for which the Union itself was made. I understand a ship to be made for the carrying and preservation of the cargo, and so long as the ship can be saved, with the cargo, it should never be abandoned. This Union should likewise never be abandoned unless it fails and the probability of its preservation shall cease to exist without throwing the passengers and cargo overboard. So long, then, as it is possible that the prosperity and the liberties of the people can be preserved in the Union, it shall be my purpose at all times to preserve it.

The Civil War saw Lincoln move quickly to save the Union by stretching and, occasionally, violating the Constitution. Since he had always said that constitutional scruple kept him from bothering slavery in the states, it is clear that early in the war he was willing to go much farther to save the Union than he was willing to go to abolish slavery. Yet he interpreted it as his constitutional duty to save the Union, even if to do so he had to violate some small part of that very Constitution. There certainly was no constitutional duty to do anything about slavery. For over a year, he did not.

On August 22, 1862, Lincoln responded to criticism from Horace Greeley by stating his slavery policy:

If there be those who would not save the Union, unless they could at the same time *save* slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time *destroy* slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle *is* to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do *not* believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do *less* whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do *more* whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors; and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.

I have here stated my purpose according to my view of *official* duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed *personal* wish that all men every where could be free.

The Emancipation Proclamation, announced just one month later, was avowedly a military act, and Lincoln boasted of his consistency almost two years later by saying, "I have done no official act in mere deference to my abstract judgment and feeling on slavery."

Nevertheless, he had changed his mind in some regards. Precisely one year before he issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln had criticized General John C. Frémont's emancipation proclamation for Missouri by saying that "as to . . . the liberation of slaves" it was "*purely political*, and not within the range of *military* law, or necessity."

If a commanding General finds a necessity to seize the farm of a private owner, for a pasture, an encampment, or a fortification, he has the right to do so, and to so hold it, as long as the necessity lasts; and this is within military law, because within military necessity. But to say the farm shall no longer belong to the owner, or his heirs forever; and this as well when the farm is not needed for military purposes as when it is, is purely political, without the savor of military law about it. And the same is true of slaves. If the General needs them, he can seize them, and use them; but when the need is past, it is not for him to fix their permanent future

condition. That must be settled according to laws made by law-makers, and not by military proclamations. The proclamation in the point in question, is simply "dictatorship." It assumes that the general may do *anything* he pleases—confiscate the lands and free the slaves of *loyal* people, as well as of disloyal ones. And going the whole figure I have no doubt would be more popular with some thoughtless people, than that which has been done! But I cannot assume this reckless position; nor allow others to assume it on my responsibility. You speak of it as being the only means of *saving* the government. On the contrary it is itself the surrender of the government. Can it be pretended that it is any longer the government of the U.S. — any government of Constitution and laws, — wherein a General, or a President, may make permanent rules of property by proclamation?

I do not say Congress might not with propriety pass a law, on the point, just such as General Fremont proclaimed. I do not say I might not, as a member of Congress, vote for it. What I object to, is, that I as President, shall expressly or impliedly seize and exercise the permanent legislative functions of the government.

Critics called this inconsistency; Lincoln's admirers have called it "growth." Whatever the case, just as Lincoln's love of Union caused him to handle the Constitution somewhat roughly, so his hatred of slavery led him, more slowly, to treat the Constitution in a manner inconceivable to him in 1861. Emancipation, if somewhat more slowly, was allowed about the same degree of constitutional latitude the Union earned in Lincoln's policies.

The destruction of slavery never became the avowed object of the war, but by insisting on its importance, militarily, to saving the Union, Lincoln made it constitutionally beyond criticism and, in all that really mattered, an aim of the war. In all practical applications, it was a condition of peace — and was so announced in the Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction of December 8, 1863, and repeatedly defended in administration statements thereafter. He reinforced this fusion of aims by insisting that the Confederacy was an attempt to establish "a new Nation, . . . with the primary, and fundamental object to maintain, enlarge, and perpetuate human slavery," thus making the enemy and slavery one and the same.

Only once did Lincoln apparently change his mind. In the desperately gloomy August of 1864, when defeat for the administration seemed certain, Lincoln bowed to pressure from Henry J. Raymond long enough to draft a letter empowering Raymond to propose peace with Jefferson Davis on the condition of reunion alone, all other questions (including slavery, of course) to be settled by a convention

afterwards. Lincoln never finished the letter, and the offer was never made. Moreover, as things looked in August, Lincoln was surrendering only what he could not keep anyway. He was so convinced that the Democratic platform would mean the loss of the Union, that he vowed in secret to work to save the Union before the next President came into office in March. He could hope for some cooperation from Democrats in this, as they professed to be as much in favor of Union as the Republicans. Without the Union, slavery could not be abolished anyhow, and the Democrats were committed to restoring slavery.

Lincoln had made abolition a party goal in 1864 by making support for the Thirteenth Amendment a part of the Republican platform. The work he performed for that measure after his election proved that his antislavery views had not abated. Near the end of his life, he repeated in a public speech one of his favorite arguments against slavery: "Whenever [I] hear any one, arguing for slavery I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally."



From the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. This Indianapolis edition of the Emancipation Proclamation, published in 1866, obviously copied the edition in Figure 2. Note, however, that the harsher scenes of slavery are removed — a sign of the post-Reconstruction political ethos.



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Number 1708

BLAIR

The elder statesman is a familiar fixture on the Washington political scene today. In recent years, the names of Clark Clifford and Averell Harriman have often appeared in the headlines at times of national crisis. Abraham Lincoln's administration was one long crisis, and Francis Preston Blair was the Civil War's elder statesman. A relic of the Presidency of Andrew Jackson, Blair was influential because of his proximity to Washington, his blurred partisanship, his many political connections, and his age and experience. At last he has a modern biographer, Elbert B. Smith, who gives considerable stress to the Civil War years in *Francis Preston Blair* (New York: The Free Press, 1980).

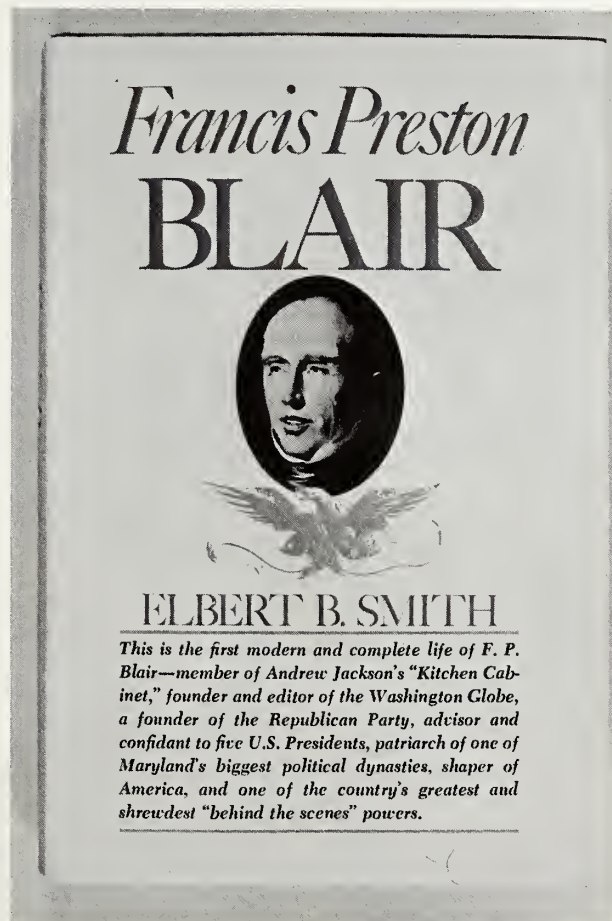
Blair was seventy years old when the Civil War began. An architect of Jacksonian Democracy in his prime, he bitterly opposed the expansion of slavery and became an important founder of the Republican party when he was well into his sixties. His family and political relations formed a powerful network throughout the Union, especially in the Border States of Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky. One of his sons, Montgomery Blair, was Lincoln's Postmaster General. Francis Preston Blair, Jr., "Frank," flitted from politics to the battlefield and had sensational impact almost everywhere he went. Even Francis P. Blair's political enemies liked him personally. His family adored him and carried his political ideas everywhere they went. Like most elder statesmen, he played his largest role in foreign policy, initiating the abortive Hampton Roads Peace Conference. Confederates who would trust no other Republican trusted Blair.

This is a competent and fair-minded biography of a man whose political ideas have not been popular in recent years. Like all elder statesmen, Blair's age made him in some respects a political troglodyte. A kindly slaveholder himself, Blair and his politically important family were ardent colonizationists long after the idea was a sociological, political, and economic absurdity. The

triumph of their conservative — even reactionary — constitutional ideas after Lincoln's death has not endeared the Blairs to modern historians. Eight years ago, when I asked a college professor what was the point of his lecture on Reconstruction in an American history survey course, he replied humorously, "To hell with Montgomery Blair." Smith's biography, which is particularly strong on the Blair family's inner workings, is a valuable corrective to this hostility absorbed by so many historians in recent years. It is most illuminating to discover how personally likable the old man was. Even the unbudging Charles Sumner never took personal exception to attacks on his political ideas by members of the Blair clan.

Nevertheless, the book's weaknesses must be the real focus of this review. Despite competent research and readable prose, *Francis Preston Blair* is lacking in at least one important respect. Professor Smith, for all his ability to capture Blair the man, never quite delineates Blair the political thinker. To describe the political thought of many a politician / editor / wire-puller, would be a mistake. Opportunism and ad hoc political apologetics too often destroy anything systematic about their political thinking. With Blair, however, it is a serious mistake not to do so. He played a larger role in making Jacksonian political doctrine than Andrew Jackson himself did. When political problems arose, President Jackson always shouted, "Take it to Blair." Despite his ability to land on his feet politically, despite his brave and clever moving with the times into the Republican party, and despite his steady personal loyalty to those he served, Blair's ideas had so ossified by the Civil War era that the most distinctive thing about him was his ideological quality. Even when his policies were up to date, the ideas underlying them were strangely archaic.

Blair was an ideologue, and his children inherited a penchant for grandiose ideas from him. It is virtually impossible, incidentally, to write about Francis Preston Blair. One



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Dust jacket of the new Blair biography.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. French troops in Mexico worried Blair but did not faze Lincoln.

must always write about the Blairs. Smith does this without really admitting that he does, probably because the only other existing work on the subject, William Ernest Smith's *The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics*, did exactly the same thing in 1933. One is immediately attracted to Elbert B. Smith's *Francis Preston Blair* because it promises to sort one member of that clan out, but, in fact, the modern Smith cannot do it either. When one finishes the new book, one still thinks of the Blairs' political ideas, not Montgomery's, not Frank's, and not the patriarch's particular ideas.

These ideas were all important, and they are all too sketchily delineated in Professor Smith's book. What Smith has failed to describe is the tendency among the Blairs to think always in systematic, gigantic, almost cosmic geopolitical terms. Among American politicians this trait has often been lacking, and it is a serious error for a biographer of such a rare thinker to ignore it.

To end the Civil War in 1865, Blair concocted a scheme to fight France in Mexico. This was the idea behind the Hamp-

ton Roads Peace Conference, and it is common knowledge. There are other clues in Smith's book that the Blairs always painted their political ideas on a grand canvas. The Blairs were not deeply troubled by the policy of emancipation. As Francis P. Blair explained to a Maryland friend as early as April 9, 1862:

You seem dissatisfied over abolition. All practical men are now sensible that slavery so affects the people whether it ought to do so or not as to make it a terrible institution to our race. They see that it imbues a brother's hand in a brother's blood, and invites foreign despots to plant monarchies on our continent. With this result before us, the only enquiry should be how to get rid of an institution which produces such miseries.

Never content with the practical, parochial, and powerful argument that slavery was bad for the white race, Blair somehow managed to conjure up the bogey of monarchy.

True, French bayonets propped Maximilian up on the Mexican throne, but most Americans took little interest in Latin America. President Lincoln was never much interested in Mexican schemes. As a former Whig, he had long detested American imperial designs on her southern neighbor. A politician of moral vision, Lincoln was also an eminently practical man, and he was content to fight one war at a time. Blair, on the other hand, was obsessed with the monarchical threat on America's southern flank. Democratic politicians, even those with free-soil proclivities like Blair's, had a weakness for Latin American ventures.

Somehow, any threat to American national solidarity caused Blair to see monarchy in the wings. Months before the firing on Fort Sumter, the elder

statesman told Lincoln that the North was "as much bound to resist the South Carolina Movement, as that of planting a monarchy in our midst by a European potentate." The days of Jackson seemed not far removed to Blair, who still called the secessionists of 1860-1861 "nullifiers." His policy of resisting secession was up-to-date, all right, but the assumptions behind it were decades old. Earlier still, just after Lincoln's election in November, 1860, Blair had given him a piece of bad advice, telling him to mention colonization in his letter accepting the Republican nomination. This would have the practical effect of warding off "the attacks, made upon us about negro equality." Blair did not leave the subject on that banal, but practical plane, however. He also launched into an elaborate analogy between the Chiriqui Improvement Company, an outfit poised to colonize blacks in Latin America, and the old East India Company, which had made England's empire in India possible. The same anarchy which had invited English intervention in India through a private corporation prevailed "among the little confederacies . . .

South of the Free States of this continent." Chiriqui, Blair said, "may be made the pivot on which to rest our lever to sway Central America and secure . . . the control . . . necessary for the preservation of our Republican Institutions." He was like an ancient and battered weather vane rusted into pointing fixedly in the same direction all the time. Sometimes the winds shifted so that he pointed the way truly, but the key factor was his fixity, not his wisdom.

Inside Blair's odd-shaped and proverbially ugly head, there swam a strange array of sophisticated but old-fashioned ideas. The electoral defeat of Breckinridge, Bell, and Douglas could lead him to think, not of possible civil war or the deeper problem of slavery and racism which underlay that threat, but of Mexico and monarchy. He could leap from political considerations of the racial views of the American electorate to geopolitical blather about analogies to the British empire. And all this was mixed with occasional acute judgments and a charming self-deprecation. In a letter written before Lincoln's election, Blair told his son Frank that Lincoln had "genius [and] . . . political knowledge" and stressed the importance of his honesty in bringing support. Blair described himself as "a sort of relic which Genl Jackson wielded against the very Nullification" which again threatened the Union.

Smith leaves much of this out, and, in doing so, he nearly leaves Blair out of his biography of Blair. It is most unfortunate that Smith chose to write a "life and times" of Blair, for his life was long and his times comprehended most of American political history from the Era of Good Feelings to the end of Reconstruction. Smith spends entirely too much time in describing general political events, sometimes well and sometimes poorly, and far too little time in analyzing Blair's political vision.

One cannot, from all evidence, dismiss as claptrap and window dressing the grand geopolitical context of Blair's often crudely practical ideas. Though attempting to escape the wrath of Northern racism may appear to be the only operative content in Blair's colonization obsession, in fact the analogies to England and the muttering about monarchy seem really to be the heart and kernel of his thought. In the letter suggesting that Lincoln talk of colonization as a way to ward off accusations that Republicans advocated racial equality, Blair explained the connection between monarchy and slavery. The Southern "oligarchy," he thought, had lost its American love of freedom and saw the "degraded lower orders of whites" as fit only to be slaves or soldiers. Southerners would rather fight than work, and such pre-bourgeois attitudes (Blair did not use that term) would lead to monarchy. From this system of ideas, at least in part, came the Blairs' famed obstinate resistance to secession and compromise!

Francis P. Blair's fevered vision of American politics was always informed by his acquaintance with world history. From the men he regarded as the great luminaries of American history, Washington, Jefferson, and Jackson, Blair claimed to have learned the inevitability of a final solution to America's race problem. "The period has come," he told Lincoln after his election, "which Mr. Jefferson saw would arrive, rendering the deportation or extermination of the African Race from among us, inevitable." He pointed to the "Hostilities of irreconcilable Castes" which "marked the annals of Spain during 800 years, springing from the abhorrent mixture of the Moors with Spaniards, in the same peninsula." Lincoln called him "Father Blair," and one can imagine the mixture of awe and incredulity with which he must have regarded such cosmic musings. The President's own political vision included little of this grand world-historical baggage. Yet at the moment of his greatest political influence on the Lincoln administration, the time of the Hampton Roads Peace Conference, Blair insisted to Lincoln: "You see that I make the great point of this matter that the War is no longer made for slavery but monarchy." The old man blurted his fears that Jefferson Davis would league with a foreign monarchy to save Southern independence. He babbled that Napoleon had wanted a black army from Santo Domingo to invade the American South, stir up insurrection, and bring about French conquest of the United States. At Hampton Roads, by contrast, Lincoln scoffed that he left history lessons to Seward. The President



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. Francis Preston Blair, Jr.

was interested in Southern peace terms — even, as G.S. Boritt has suggested, in how much coin it would take essentially to bribe the South into reunion.

Jefferson Davis was a political realist too. He told Blair that France did not want a Mexican empire as much as she wanted a base from which to build up her feeble navy. Davis, at war with an industrially superior nation, knew the lure of coal, iron, and timber. Blair did not get the point. He still feared that Davis would become France's ally in subjecting the United States to monarchy. The elder statesman told Lincoln, far too busy even to read long letters from his generals, to observe the parallels with modern times in Carlyle's *Life of Frederick the Great*.

An old-fashioned idea lay at the heart of Francis P. Blair's thought and that of his influential children. Jacksonian ideologues always saw sharp class conflicts in America. They thought government aid to private corporations aided only rich men. They denied the possible general benefits of economic development. Such issues were irrelevant during the Civil War, but seeing Southern society in the same class terms was not. A perception of class conflict between Southern poor whites and a slaveholding oligarchy apparently lay at the bottom of Blair's fears of Southern willingness to invite monarchies to save their movement for independence. This error in perception of Southern society had serious political consequences. Montgomery Blair inherited from his father a penchant for seeing class conflict, whether it was there or not. Montgomery always insisted that secession was a minority movement and that "Military Government" in the Confederacy held the essentially loyal Southern masses at bay. This was carrying the common Northern belief in the existence of a slave oligarchy to an extreme, but in 1861 more people than the Blairs believed it. Even President Lincoln may have thought that way in 1861. He at least insisted that there was no majority for secession in any Southern state except, perhaps, South Carolina.

Ever the practical observer, Lincoln came to see that this could not be so. After two and one-half years of war, Lincoln admitted that it would be difficult to find even ten percent of the population in any Southern state loyal to the Union. Montgomery Blair never changed his mind. The rigid Blair class analysis ground to its inexorable conclusions. The point



A SELF-APPOINTED ENVOY.

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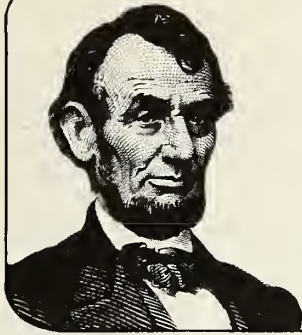
FIGURE 4. This cartoon from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, January 21, 1865, depicted Blair as a granny, trying to bring the Confederacy to the bargaining table with sugarplums and barley water. General Ulysses S. Grant points to cannonballs as the more appropriate way of convincing the Confederates to rejoin the Union.

of the Postmaster General's famous speech at Rockville, Maryland, late in 1863, was that there existed a loyal *majority* in the South against which the North must never be at war. It brought him the undying hatred of all the Radical Republicans (except friendly Charles Sumner). There is little wonder the Blairs opposed Reconstruction. They had never seen much disloyalty in need of restructuring into loyalty.

It is almost impossible to write a decent biography of a man the biographer hates. The spirit rebels so at spending great amounts of time with an unlikable person that it can result only in unbalanced fulmination against the poor subject of the biography. The problem with Elbert B. Smith's *Francis Preston Blair* is not its mild bias in favor of its subject. This is almost necessary in order to attract a biographer to work, and it is rendered harmless by the common knowledge that most biographers suffer from this fault. Abraham Lincoln himself scorned biography because of its predictable lionization of its subject, no matter what the subject's faults.

The problem with this book is more serious. Smith fails essentially to capture Francis Preston Blair's nature. The

ideologue surfaces only occasionally, most notably in Smith's treatment of Frank Blair's speech "The Destiny of the Races of this Continent," delivered in Boston in 1859. There the great Blair political universe is laid out in an astonishing array of references to Dr. Livingstone on African hybrids and to the role of Moors in Spanish history. The speech, as Blair's daughter observed, dazzled "not only the politicians — but the Literati — & State street gentility." Smith's discussion of it dazzles the modern reader too and should make him wonder where all these ideas came from and whither they were going in the Civil War. This rare and brief glimpse of the Blair world view is but a dazzling moment in what is otherwise a competent, but sometimes sketchy, chronicle of Blair's role in many events of American history described at too great length. The inner springs of this fascinating elder statesman's thought and actions are too often left unexplained. And, as Smith's book clearly proves, Blair's thought and action were too important to too many people — from Andrew Jackson to Abraham Lincoln, from Thomas Hart Benton to Charles Sumner — to be left in such a state.



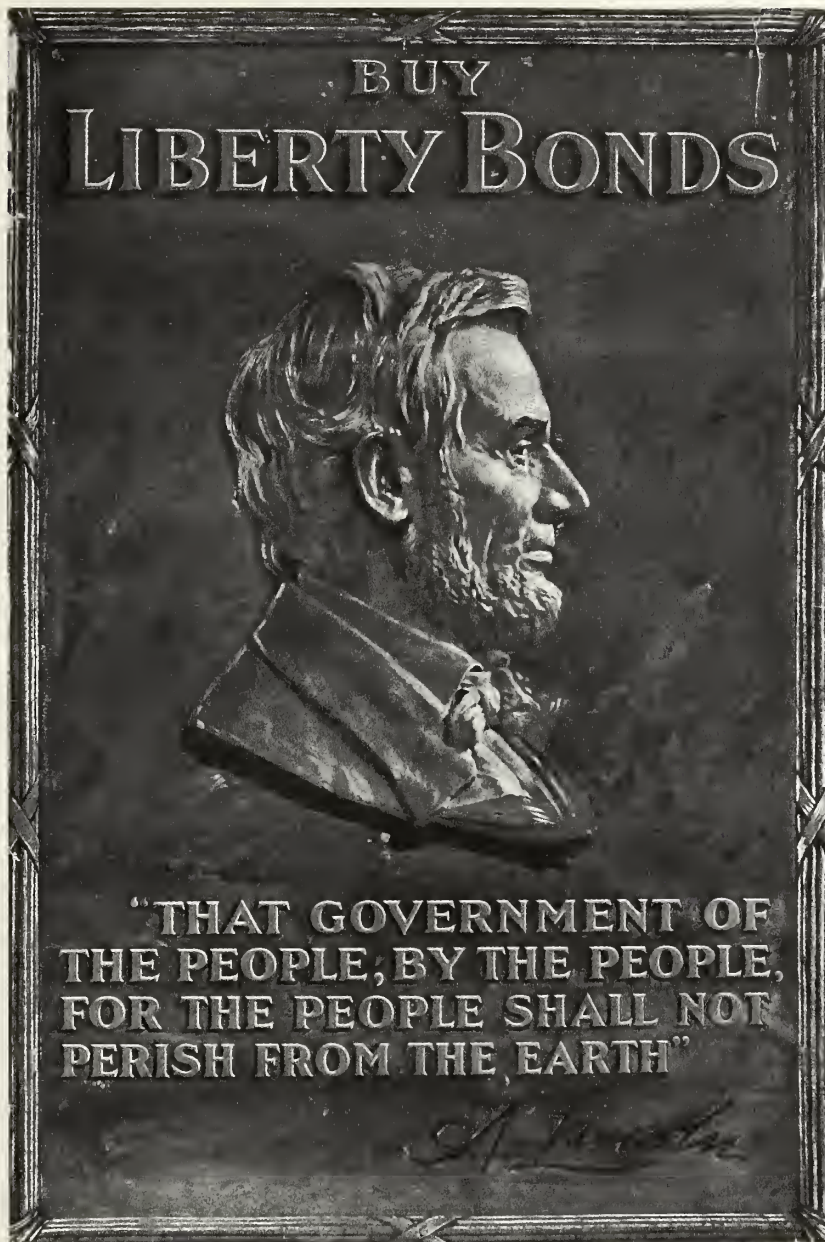
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Of Tangled Stories and Charnwood's *Lincoln*



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. The centennial celebration of Lincoln's birth in 1909 helped make Lincoln's image a powerful national symbol. By the time of World War I, Lincoln's face appeared frequently in war propaganda. In the same era, Charnwood's *Lincoln* helped make him an international figure.

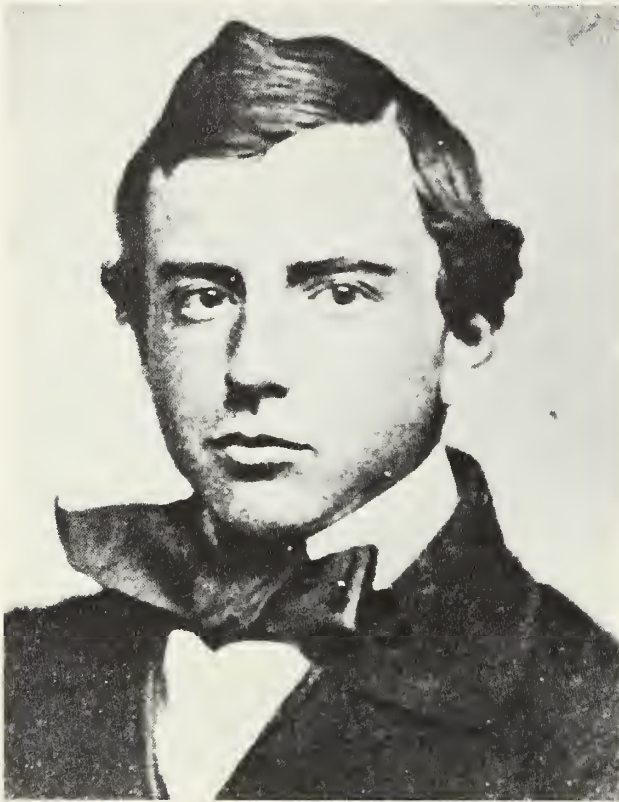
Godfrey Rathbone Benson, Lord Charnwood, was an unlikely Lincoln biographer. The British upper classes were notoriously pro-Southern during the American Civil War, and he was born in that station in life in 1864. He did well at Oxford University, where he was later a tutor. He became a Member of Parliament and the Mayor of Lichfield.

After his graduation from Oxford in 1887, Charnwood made a tour of the United States. He returned briefly—to Boston and New York—in 1894. In politics, he was a Liberal. He was obviously interested in the United States, and, as a boy, he had read Charles G. Leland's *Abraham Lincoln*, a book memorable enough to be mentioned in the brief bibliographical note at the end of Charnwood's biography of Lincoln.

Charnwood's *Abraham Lincoln* was published in England in 1916. Available evidence suggests that his boyhood interest in Lincoln, his acquaintance with and admiration for the United States, and his liberal political leanings helped lead him to writing the book. The date of its publication, however, more strongly suggests that the atmosphere of cooperation between the United States and England, which grew up at the time of the First World War, must have played a large role in molding a sympathetic interest into the drive to write a substantial book on Abraham Lincoln.

The result, as all Lincoln students are aware, was wonderful. George Bernard Shaw told Lincoln collector Judd Stewart that Charnwood's "very penetrating biography" created "a cult of Lincoln in England." Its reception in America, following its publication there in 1917, was equally enthusiastic. The enthusiasm, as Paul M. Angle later noted, was lasting and pointed to merits in the work beyond its timeliness for the period of the final thaw in Anglo-American relations. In 1935 Roy P. Basler thought that Carl Sandburg and Nathaniel Wright Stephenson presented "the best version of the private Lincoln," but Charnwood's was still "the best of the public Lincoln." As late as 1947, Benjamin P. Thomas, an excellent judge of such matters, called Charnwood's book "the best one-volume life of Lincoln ever written."

Lincoln students may be a little unclear in regard to the precise reason Charnwood wrote his book, but they are unanimous on the reasons for its high reputation and popularity. David M. Potter's *The Lincoln Theme and American National Historiography* identified these clearly. No Lincoln biography before



Courtesy Adams National Historic Site
from the *Dictionary of American Portraits*,
published by Dover Publications,
Inc., in 1967

FIGURE 2. Henry Adams.

Charnwood's was "genuinely contemplative." Charnwood's *Lincoln*, as it is usually called, was Paul M. Angle's *A Shelf of Lincoln Books* put it this way: "... it is not primarily factual, as for example, Nicolay's *Short Life* is factual. The emphasis is rather upon interpretation and analysis." Potter also pointed to the book's "notable literary excellence." Angle credited Charnwood with bringing "literary skill to the Lincoln theme," far exceeding the prosaic Nicolay and Hay or the hasty journalistic style of Ida Tarbell. Potter found "especial merit" in Charnwood's ability "to grasp the universality of Lincoln's significance." Angle also noted the Englishman's "conviction that Lincoln was one of the world's truly great men." Though critics did not say so explicitly, this trait set the book apart from the narrow nationalism even of contemporary biographers as talented as Stephenson and Albert Beveridge.

Charnwood was sympathetic, but he wrote from a cultural distance that Midwesterners like William Herndon, Jesse Weik, John Nicolay, and John Hay lacked perforce. This exempted Charnwood from a kind of partisanship that no American at the time seemed able to escape. Potter saw in this the root of Charnwood's unembarrassed ability to ask the "hard" questions about Lincoln:

Did Lincoln temporize too much on slavery? Was there a quality of "cheap opportunism" in his political record? Did his policy at Fort Sumter differ from Buchanan's enough to justify the customary practice of gibbeting the silly old man while leaving Lincoln free from criticism? Was he, in the last analysis, responsible for precipitating the Civil War?

Lord Charnwood admitted that he did not "shrink... from the display of a partisanship" that led him to state frankly that the South's cause was wrong. What made his book exceptional was, as Potter stated, that Charnwood at least asked the questions. What also made the book good was Charnwood's view—as accurate today as it was in 1916—that the "true obligation of impartiality is that he [the author] should conceal no fact which, in his own mind, tells against his views." His was not the advocate's effort to pile up all the facts that help his argument but the fair-minded historian's

attempt to answer those arguments which seem most telling against his own case.

Charnwood, therefore, was never afraid to criticize Lincoln. Relying on the inaccurate literature available at the time, for example, Charnwood pictured Lincoln's father as "a migrant" and claimed that the "unseemliness in talk of rough, rustic boys flavoured the great President's conversation through life." (He saw, more accurately, that Lincoln was "void of romantic fondness for vanished joys of youth.") He labeled Lincoln's use of martial law in the North a usurpation of power.

Charnwood did no original research for the book and relied for facts on a small number of standard works, but he was a well-read man who used his generally cultured background to good effect. In a passage of marvelous irony, the learned Englishman criticized one of America's own great critics of democracy, Henry Adams, by saying, "It is a contemptible trait in books like that able novel 'Democracy,' that they treat the sentiment which attached to the 'Rail-splitter' as anything but honourable." Less accurate in the long run but appealing in the period of the book's greatest popularity was the viewpoint Charnwood derived from reading James Bryce's *American Commonwealth*. That critique of American politics made Charnwood hostile to political parties and the spoils system that Lincoln used so well. Charnwood saw American party politics as avoiding serious issues and largely incapable of producing great leaders. Of Lincoln's election in 1860, he said that "the fit man was chosen on the very ground of his supposed unfitness."

Lord Charnwood appreciated Lincoln's common origins, but he dwelled particularly on Lincoln's statesmanship. Secession, to Charnwood, was a broadly popular movement in the South aimed at saving slavery, and Lincoln's efforts to counter it were noble, progressive, and somehow Christian. Following a current of British military opinion at the time, he praised Lincoln's abilities as a commander in chief. He did not belittle the Emancipation Proclamation. It could be interpreted as a narrowly military measure only in law, Charnwood argued. Given the limited research he did for the biography, one is not surprised to learn that Charnwood repeated some spurious quotations and anecdotes. He often handled these well. Of the apocryphal story of Lincoln's clemency for the sleeping sentinel William Scott, Charnwood concluded: "If the story is not true—and there is no reason whatever to doubt it—still it is a remarkable man of whom



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. Jesse Weik.

people spin yarns of that kind." A man of deep religious interests himself, Charnwood noted Lincoln's growth in that realm to the "language of intense religious feeling" in the Second Inaugural Address.

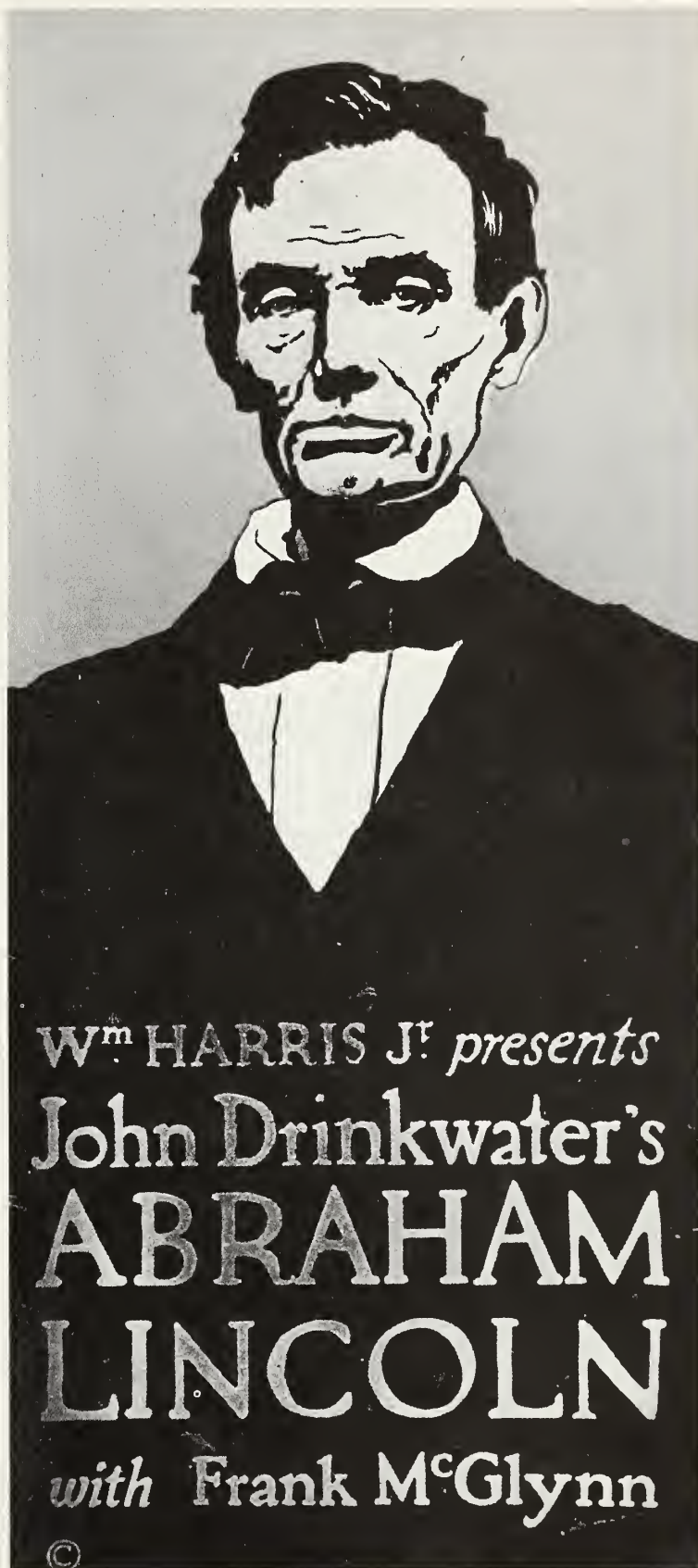
Charnwood kept his focus on the meaning of Lincoln's efforts to save the Union. These, he thought, were attempts to save democratic government for the whole world. He properly stressed Lincoln's praise for Henry Clay as a patriot who "loved his country, partly because it was his own country, and mostly because it was a free country."

Maintaining focus in a Lincoln biography was a real achievement, and focusing it on the truly important questions was Charnwood's greatest achievement. It is difficult to discover the means by which he did this because Charnwood letters are rather scarce in this country. This institution, though it seeks the letters of Lincoln's biographers, has not a single Charnwood letter. The Illinois State Historical Library has less than half a dozen. Among the later, however, there is one illuminating letter to Jesse W. Weik.

Written on May 17, 1919, just after Charnwood's triumphant lecture tour of the United States, the letter acknowledged Weik's gift of two Lincoln autographs for Lady Charnwood's autograph collection. Echoing a phrase from a famous Lincoln letter, Lord Charnwood characterized the gift as "such an addition . . . as she had never hoped to obtain, knowing that indeed Lincoln autographs are not plenty as blackberries." He apologized for the delay in writing. His younger son, eight years old, had been killed in a fall from a pony. He told Weik that the United States appeared much changed since his first visit thirty-one years before, "mainly . . . for the good."

Naturally, the letter soon got around to the subject of Abraham Lincoln. On his recent tour of the United States, Lord Charnwood wrote, "I came across, & indeed have been coming across ever since I published my book, many signs of the tendency, which had been active, to make a sort of stained-glass-window figure of Lincoln, quite removed from genuine human sympathy & impossible really to revere." He noted, tactfully, that Weik's own book, written with William Herndon, "made it impossible that such a tendency should lastingly prevail." In writing Weik, Charnwood diplomatically avoided commenting directly on the overall accuracy of the Herndon-Weik book. He said only that he had studied it carefully or that it prevented uncritical hero worship. Charnwood was careful thus to pay his "respects to one of the pioneer writers on the subject of which" Charnwood was "a junior student."

Charnwood's tour had brought him into contact with the controversies over Lincoln's ancestry, then raging in America. "The question," Charnwood commented, "is of little interest in itself,—not that heredity is an unimportant influence (for of course it is vastly important) but that its working is generally too subtle to be traced, that when we have the correct names of a great man's grand-parents & great-grand-parents (& how few of us can name all our great-grand-parents!) they generally remain mere names, and finally that nothing in his or any man's ancestry adds anything or detracts anything to or from his individual worth." Here again was Lord Charnwood at his tactful and ironic best—an Englishman, who did "not care two pence, or a cent (which is less) about the authority of this or any other pedigree (my own for example)," giving lessons on individualism to an American whose book had made rather a sensation for what it said about Lincoln's ancestry.



*From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum*

FIGURE 4. British playwright John Drinkwater drew inspiration for his popular play about Lincoln from Lord Charnwood's biography. The play was first performed in America in 1919.

"So," Charnwood said, "this question thoroughly bores me." Then, remembering the letter's recipient, he added a hasty parenthetical comment—"except that Lincoln's own interest in the subject is an interesting trait in him as Herndon & Weik record it." Still, having written a book about Lincoln, Charnwood felt that he might be "bound to know what there is to be known about it." Several questions followed for the sake of "antiquarian accuracy."

Charnwood had known of the questions surrounding Lincoln's Hanks ancestry when he wrote his book, and he queried Weik about new theories on the legitimacy of Lincoln's mother. In America, Charnwood had been astonished to learn that some raised questions about Lincoln's own legitimacy. "My time at Springfield," Charnwood said, "(in which I met some delightful people of the older generation who gave me, though without much detail a vivid impression of old times) was a little too much taken up with hearing tangled stories in which this question [of Lincoln's legitimacy] got mixed up with the other which I have spoken of [the question of Lincoln's mother's legitimacy]." One man in particular had been much taken with the notion that Lincoln was descended from John Marshall. "I think my friend," Charnwood went on, "is merely suffering from a variety of the same disease which makes others desire to derive Lincoln from wholly respectable people of [as] good standing as possible. He can not suffer it that a great man should have arisen without some ancestor of manifest intellectual eminence." Charnwood was "inclined to treat the idea as rubbish," but he still wanted to know whether there was anything to it.

Lord Charnwood concluded his letter thus:

I feel almost ashamed to have filled up my letter with questions which are of no importance in comparison with the actual life & work & character of the man who was any way Abraham Lincoln whoever his ancestors were.

Never afraid to ask questions or hear answers that might change his mind, Lord Charnwood nevertheless kept his focus always on the essentials of Lincoln's greatness.

Lloyd Ostendorf Joins Bibliography Committee

Lloyd Ostendorf of Dayton, Ohio, will join the Bibliography Committee which passes judgment on the inclusion of items in *Lincoln Lore's* Cumulative Bibliography. Born in Dayton on June 23, 1921, Mr. Ostendorf graduated from Stivers High School in his home town in 1939. He began studying art after his graduation. He attended the Dayton Art Institute from 1939 to 1941. He spent the summer of 1940 in New York City, studying with cartoonist Milton Caniff and his associates. In 1941 Mr. Ostendorf enlisted in the Army Air Corps, with which he served until 1945.

The war interrupted Mr. Ostendorf's career in illustration and portrait work which began in 1939. He has furnished art work for many different publications and projects, and much of it has focused on Abraham Lincoln. Fascinated by the "oddly balanced ruggedness and beauty" of Lincoln's face, he began drawing pictures of Lincoln when he was twelve years old. His attention naturally turned to the photographs of Lincoln which he copied and adapted. Mr. Ostendorf got special encouragement in his work from Louis A. Warren, one of the few Lincoln authorities at the time interested in encouraging work with Lincoln pictures. As he sought photographs from which to work, Mr. Ostendorf also came into contact with Frederick Hill Meserve, the first great student and collector of Lincoln photographs. Meserve was "as nice as an old man could be to a young man" who shared his interest, Mr. Ostendorf remembers.

Mr. Ostendorf's first book *A Picture Story of Abraham Lincoln* (1962), a biography for young readers, was so popular that it has been reissued by Lamplight Publishing, Inc., as *Abraham Lincoln: The Boy and the Man*. His next work was

Lincoln in Photographs: An Album of Every Known Pose (1963), which he wrote with Charles Hamilton. This book, essential to even the smallest Lincoln library, is still available from the University of Oklahoma Press. Hardly a week passes in which the staff of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum fails to consult this fine book to answer questions about Lincoln photographs and the many lithographs and engravings inspired by them, and this is surely true of every other Lincoln institution as well.

Mr. Ostendorf's expertise in this very specialized but popular area of Lincolniana has been widely recognized. Lincoln Memorial University awarded him the Lincoln Diploma of Honor in 1966. Lincoln College awarded him an honorary degree (Litt. D.) in 1968, and Lincoln Memorial University added another (Art. D.) in 1974. He has been the art editor of the *Lincoln Herald* since 1957, and all Lincoln students are familiar with the wonderfully varied covers he provides for that quarterly journal. He was also an honorary member of the National Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission.

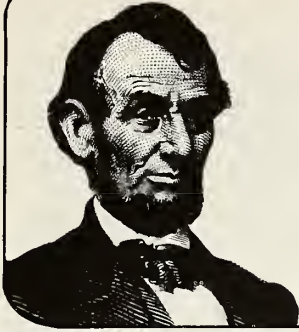
Mr. Ostendorf, in addition to illustrating greeting cards and religious materials, maintains his interest in Lincolniana. He recently completed a painting of Lincoln's stepmother for the Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center in Mattoon, Illinois. Another recent portrait of Mary Todd Lincoln as a young woman hangs in the restored Todd home in Lexington, Kentucky. Studying photographs in order to determine what historical figures looked like in periods when no photographs of them are available is a special interest. Mr. Ostendorf has also been working on three books: a study of Lincoln portraits from life (with Harold Holzer); the recollections of Mariah Vance, a Lincoln family maid in Springfield (with David Balsiger); and a Lincoln family photograph album (with James T. Hickey).

Over the years, Mr. Ostendorf's interests have grown from Lincoln's physical appearance to all aspects of his life. His general knowledge and his special expertise make him a most welcome addition to the advisory board.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 5. Lloyd Ostendorf



Lincoln Lore

August, 1981

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1722

LAWANDA COX ON RECONSTRUCTION IN LOUISIANA: A REVIEW

President Lincoln's attempt to reconstruct Louisiana has been the focus of a tremendous amount of attention in recent years. It has provided the exclusive subject matter of two major books in the last three years: Peyton McCrary's *Abraham Lincoln and Reconstruction: The Louisiana Experiment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978) and LaWanda Cox's *Lincoln and Black Freedom: A Study in Presidential Leadership* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981). Other historians have given it considerable notice in books, articles, and scholarly papers of broader focus. Reconstruction in Louisiana is a hot topic these days.

The attraction lies not so much in swampy Louisiana itself as in the subject of Reconstruction, for Lincoln made Louisiana a sort of model of his policy toward the conquered South. Interest in Reconstruction is high for three principal reasons. First, scholars, jurists, reformers, and policy makers have been look-

ing for precedents set in the 1860s and 1870s for the modern movement for civil rights for black people a century later. Indeed, the measures of the modern era are sometimes called the Second Reconstruction. That initial impulse to study the first Reconstruction is well on the wane, but scholars trained in graduate schools in the 1960s did their initial work on Reconstruction and continue to work in the field even though many reformers, jurists, and policy makers have abandoned those concerns. If that second factor may be characterized as scholarly inertia, a third factor is surely scholarly thoroughness. There is a sense abroad in academe that Reconstruction scholarship, like the Second Reconstruction to which it was a handmaiden, must move on to new insights that go well beyond the now old-fashioned attempt to prove that Reconstruction was not as bad as most white Americans used to think.

LaWanda Cox, with her late husband John, wrote one of the



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. When Union forces arrived in Louisiana, Lincoln had his first big chance to reconstruct a state.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Some New Orleans residents scrambled to take the oath of allegiance to the United States.

1960s' most important and influential works on Reconstruction, *Politics, Principle, and Prejudice, 1865-1866: Dilemma of Reconstruction America*, a book which did much to destroy Andrew Johnson's reputation. Mrs. Cox was already a mature scholar at the advent of the heyday of Reconstruction studies. Her interest in the subject endures because of essentially scholarly impulses. In her long career, she came across documents which did not seem to jibe with the accepted wisdom on Abraham Lincoln's Reconstruction policies, and she wanted to figure out what was correct.

In one respect, but in one respect only, her conclusions are not original. She shares with McCrary and other scholars a view, fast gaining wide acceptance among historians, that Abraham Lincoln would have reconstructed the South had John Wilkes Booth not stopped him. In light of the preponderance of evidence in favor of this view — one thinks immediately of the numerous Lincoln letters urging military governors in the South to get on with the work of reconstructing their states — the conclusion may seem obvious and banal. A quick glance at the conclusions reached by the previous generation of historians like Allan Nevins and James G. Randall, will quickly reveal the unanimity of the contrary opinion until very recent times. And outside the scholarly community, the older view still reigns supreme and shows few signs of movement toward the newer view. It will require many more reiterations than Mrs. Cox's to turn the tide of majority opinion, and there is nothing wrong with her reasserting this truth.

The real originality of *Lincoln and Black Freedom* lies in the nature of Mrs. Cox's proof of the proposition that Lincoln would have reconstructed the South had he lived to complete his second term. Readers of McCrary's book in particular will be surprised to see who Mrs. Cox's heroes and villains are. The reader should not be fooled by her assertion that her approach in the book was "one of reflection rather than research." She has solid documentation for her most important conclusions. She

read the crucial documents and, more important, read them with care and with discerning and sympathetic intelligence. It is a convincing book.

The care with which Mrs. Cox read the documents is apparent in her first chapter. Relying for the most part on documents read by hundreds of historians before her, she manages nevertheless to describe Lincoln's policies toward slavery in a fresh and exciting way:

When war opened possibilities unapproachable in the 1850s, Lincoln's reach was not found wanting. Indeed, there is something breathtaking in his advance from prewar advocacy of restricting slavery's spread to foremost responsibility for slavery's total, immediate, uncompensated destruction by constitutional amendment. The progression represented a positive exercise of leadership. It has often been viewed as a reluctant accommodation to pressures; it can better be understood as a ready response to opportunity. Willing to settle for what was practicable, provided it pointed in the right direction, Lincoln was alert to the expanding potential created by war. Military needs, foreign policy, Radical agitation did not force him upon an alien course but rather helped clear a path toward a long-desired but intractable objective. Having advanced, Lincoln recognized the danger of a forced retreat, a retreat to be forestalled with certainty only by military victory and constitutional amendment. His disclaimer of credit for "the removal of a great wrong" which he attributed to "God alone," though in a sense accurate, for the process of emancipation did not follow his or any man's design, was nonetheless misleading.

Although historians have often remarked on Lincoln's "growth" in office, none has heretofore called the rapidity of change in his views on slavery "breathtaking."

Can Mrs. Cox document it? In a word, yes. She notes that Lincoln was the first President ever to ask Congress to pass an amendment to the Constitution fully drafted by the President

himself (in December, 1862). "Lincoln took the initiative against slavery," she says. When he had first suggested his scheme for gradual and compensated emancipation in the border states the previous March, "Congress had not yet taken any action against slavery as such." The first Confiscation Act (August, 1861) affected only slaves used for military purposes, and the bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia had not yet passed either house. Even Wendell Phillips had to admit that Lincoln was "better than his Congress fellows." The Phillips letter came to light only in 1979. Mrs. Cox has been reading as well as reflecting.

Mrs. Cox's interpretation of the Emancipation Proclamation likewise gives firm support for her use of the word "breath-taking":

In issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln is sometimes seen as lagging behind Congress, which had passed the Second Confiscation Act on July 17, 1862. Yet the first draft of his proclamation was presented to the cabinet just five days later and his decision had been made earlier, at least by July 13 — that is, before Congress acted. When his advisers convinced him to delay until a Union victory, Lincoln promptly issued the first paragraph of his draft as a separate proclamation giving warning that all persons who did not return to their allegiance would be subject, as provided by the Confiscation Act, to forfeitures and seizures.

The discerning intelligence with which Mrs. Cox read the documents is everywhere apparent. She knows that tone is

important. In discussing Lincoln's message on compensated emancipation of the spring of 1862, she notes that in "earnestly beg[ging] the attention of Congress and the people," he "rejected the suggestion that he substitute 'respectfully' for 'earnestly.'" He pleaded for his program "in full view of my great responsibility to my God, and to my country." Mrs. Cox adds shrewdly: "In this first major antislavery document of his presidency the word order of 'God' and 'country' may be not unworthy of note." Lincoln was honest, but he was also crafty, as Mrs. Cox knows from her sensitive reading of his works. When rumors that Confederate peace commissioners were coming to Washington threatened passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in the House early in 1865, James Ashley asked the President for a denial.

Pressed, Lincoln sent a one-sentence, carefully phrased response: "So far as I know, there are no peace commissioners in the city, or likely to be in it." Peace commissioners, as Lincoln well knew, were on their way — but to Fortress Monroe rather than to "the city."

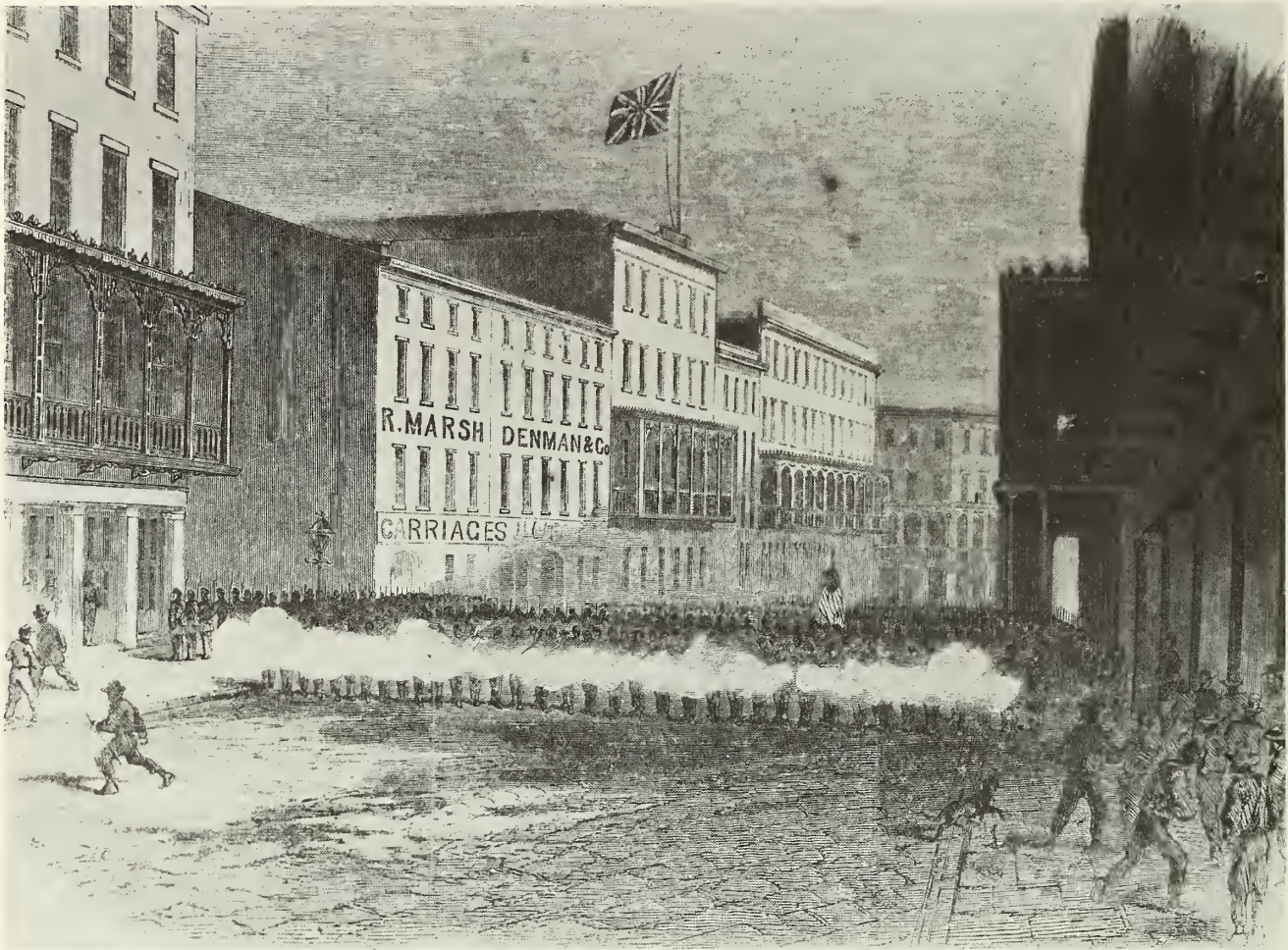
Lincoln and Black Freedom is a book for aficionados who will appreciate the subtle interpretations and the careful attention to chronology.

When Mrs. Cox turns her formidable talents to the subject of Reconstruction in Louisiana, she reaches even more impressive and original conclusions. Her straightforward chronological approach allows her first to document Lincoln's education into the realities of disloyal sentiment in the South. Beginning with the notion that indigenous forces in occupied Louisiana could,



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. Union generals lectured Louisiana's blacks on their duties as freedmen.



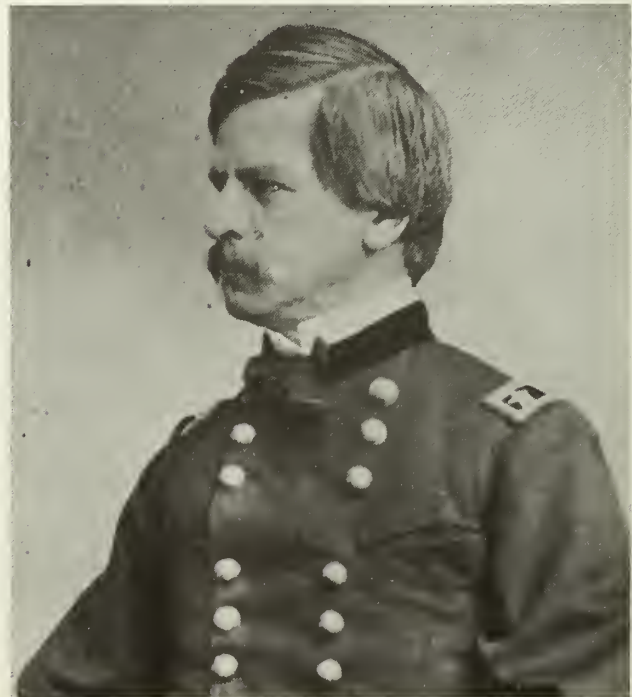
From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. Military power was much in evidence as Union soldiers practiced "street firing" in New Orleans.

with a little encouragement, create a new free state government, the President learned gradually that it could not be done — at least not before 1864, when the threat of Democratic control of the national government might end all efforts to undermine slavery. Slowly he came around to the view of General Nathaniel P. Banks, the Northern military commander in the region, that it could be done by means of military pressure without anything approaching a majority of the local population. That education informed Lincoln's general Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction of December 8, 1863, which asked only for a ten percent nucleus around which to form a free state in any of the occupied South. Banks's idea, which soon became Lincoln's, was to organize elections for state offices under the old prewar proslavery constitution and declare the parts of that constitution upholding slavery null by sheer military authority. It would take too long to wait for majority opinion even among the loyal people of Louisiana to come around to the conviction that slavery should be abolished in a new state constitution.

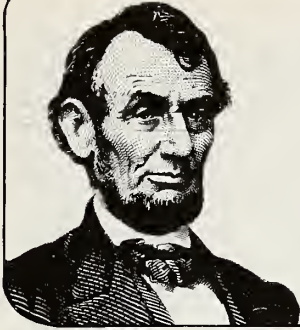
Readers of Peyton McCrary's *Abraham Lincoln and Reconstruction* will be surprised to hear of this concurrence of views between Lincoln and General Banks. McCrary accused Banks of deceiving Lincoln into thinking that the local antislavery loyalists, the Free State Committee led by Thomas J. Durant, were dragging their feet in registering voters for a constitutional convention. Banks, McCrary argued, gained control of the political situation in Louisiana and engineered a conservative "coup" which undermined the more radical Free State movement. As Mrs. Cox points out, however, it was a long letter from Durant to Lincoln (October, 1863) which revealed to the President that little or nothing was being done in Louisiana.

(To be continued)



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 5. General Nathaniel P. Banks.



Lincoln Lore

September, 1981

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Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
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Number 1723

LAWANDA COX ON RECONSTRUCTION IN LOUISIANA: A REVIEW (Cont.)

The President then blamed Banks for the lack of progress, and the general, whose military duties kept him from seeing Lincoln's letter until December 2nd, did not get around to defending himself until December 6th. Banks said, and it was true, that he had no orders authorizing him to take charge of the political situation. Since word that it would take a long time to organize a constitutional convention in Louisiana came from Durant himself, it is little wonder that Lincoln turned to Banks and sustained him, as Mrs. Cox argues, when he differed with Durant and the Free State movement.

Mrs. Cox's understanding of the situation in Louisiana is markedly different from McCrary's. In her book, Banks is depicted as leading a temporarily successful Unionist move-

ment in Louisiana fully in keeping with the President's wishes. In his book, Banks is depicted as the President's deceiver. In Mrs. Cox's work, Durant appears as a difficult stumbling block to progress toward the goal of making Louisiana a free state before adverse political developments in 1864 could undermine the work. In Mr. McCrary's work, Durant appears as a man thoroughly wronged by Banks and a President working under false assumptions about political reality in Louisiana.

Mrs. Cox wins this argument hands down. Durant chose to make his name in history by opposing the Lincoln-Banks government and by claiming that it was engineered to undermine the radical Free Staters' desire to urge suffrage for Negroes in Louisiana. *Lincoln and Black Freedom* shows that in fact



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Governor Michael Hahn's inauguration in New Orleans, March 4, 1864.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Mrs. Banks sponsored a splendid entertainment on election day in Louisiana.

the President, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, and Durant himself were, in the beginning, all in agreement on the suffrage issue. All three were committed to registering freeborn black citizens, principally the New Orleans Creoles.

Durant had not gone farther than that in urging black suffrage by February, 1864. And Lincoln had already gone that far. He had twice approved registration of freeborn Negroes as voters in Louisiana. Lincoln approved Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton's order of August 24, 1863, telling the military governor in Louisiana to register "all the loyal citizens of the United States" there. Chase had objected to the first draft of the order, which stipulated organizing a constitutional convention based on the white population. The final order stipulated "loyal" citizens rather than "white" citizens. "For the instructions," Chase said, "we are indebted to Mr. Stanton and the President." In the following November, Chase had to write to urge Durant, in charge of the voter registration, to register Negro citizens. Durant replied that he favored it himself, but it would be helpful to have specific directives from Washington. Chase went to Lincoln. "I informed the President of your views on this subject," Chase told Durant on December 28, 1863, "and he said he could see no objection to the registering of such citizens, or to their exercise of the right of suffrage."

Banks ruined this hopeful unanimity of opinion on a delicate subject by opposing any black suffrage. He feared that the issue would divide Southern loyalists and endanger the abolition of slavery by the new state government. The split in the Louisiana loyalists which followed was Banks's fault, as McCrary and Cox both agree, but it was also Durant's fault. In a huff over Banks's assumption of power in Louisiana at the President's direction, he chose not to discuss and compromise but to fight the Banks government to the bitter end.

That opposition, combined with the suspicions of the radical

antislavery men that Lincoln was not radical enough to suit them, eventually doomed the Louisiana experiment. Banks, a political general if there ever was one, proved to be politically inept. Mrs. Cox describes the demise of the experiment with equally convincing attention to close reading of the documents and careful chronology. In sum, there is a great deal more in the book than can be described within the confines of this review.

If there is a significant flaw in *Lincoln and Black Freedom*, it is an error of omission rather than one of commission. Mrs. Cox tends to be a bit skimpy on biography. With as famous a figure as Lincoln, this is no problem. In his case she very properly focuses on the particular problem and aims at straightening out the reader's understanding of Lincoln's role in it.

With Nathaniel P. Banks, Mrs. Cox's failure to provide a wider biographical focus is more problematic. "The fate of Lincoln's free state," she says accurately, "suggests the vulnerability of presidential purpose and power to ineptitude of execution, the obstinacy of human nature, and misperceptions fired by the passion of great ends linked to personal conceits." She documents Lincoln's purpose in the Louisiana experiment better than anyone has ever done before. She finds the important instances of ineptitude. She describes Durant's obstinacy in unforgettable terms. She shows the vital links between personal conceits and conflicts over national policy. Yet Banks's inept policies are central to the story, as is his obstinacy and his conceit. They are as central as Lincoln's purposeful leadership, but they are not as well described.

Mrs. Cox realizes that Banks was too optimistic. When he told Lincoln that reconstructing Louisiana as a free state would be no more difficult than "the passage of a dog law in Massachusetts," Banks made one of the worst predictions in American history. Thirteen years of Federal occupation and struggle — some of it bloody — followed Banks's assumption of political control in Louisiana. There was special irony, as she points out,



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. While Louisiana's loyal citizens voted, a military band played in Canal Street. It was George Washington's Birthday, and the occupying troops marked the anniversary with patriotic fervor.

"in the political general failing to be politic." She shows very well what went wrong in Louisiana, but she does not say why Banks erred. There was the factor of his gross optimism, of course, but why was he so optimistic?

Only biography can tell, and the problematic nature of Banks's conception of the Louisiana experiment seems glaring enough to demand more attention to his biography. Advising President Lincoln on Louisiana policy in 1863, Banks said:

Offer them a Government without slavery, and they will gladly accept it as a necessity resulting from the war. Other questions relating to the condition of the negro, may safely be deferred until this one is secured. If he gains freedom, education, the right to bear arms, the highest privileges accorded to any race and which none has yet proved itself worthy unless it be our own, his best friend may rest content for another year at least.

In January, he told Lincoln that the government he was creating in Louisiana with the help of Federal bayonets would provide "for the gradual restoration of power to the people" but "in such manner as to leave the control of affairs still in the hands of the comm[an]ding General." When Louisiana citizens elected Michael Hahn governor, they "understood . . . that Mr. Hahn represents a popular power entirely subordinate to the armed occupation of the state for the suppression of the rebellion and the full restoration of the authority of the government." "The election perilled nothing," Banks told the President — "Had it resulted in the election of an opponent, he would be without power." When Louisiana's new constitution abolished slavery in September, Banks crowed: "History will record the fact that all the problems involved in restoration of States . . .

have already been solved in Louisiana with a due regard to the elevation of the black and security of the white Race."

Such optimism seems glaringly wrong in the light of subsequent events in Louisiana, but it is more than "twenty-twenty hindsight" that makes the error clear. Foresight at the time surely demanded that General Banks ask what would happen when the Federal troops left. Would the Negro's advance, left to the future, occur then? When the Confederates returned, the opposition would surely win elections. Would the opponents be powerless then? To be sure, Banks's statements were meant to let Lincoln know that the military would not allow a disloyal government to rule if the Unionists lost in 1864, but should not even that mention of the subject have caused Banks to wonder about 1865 or 1866?

Banks was sanguine. He would let the future take care of itself. His government would satisfy the abolitionists for another year (he thought, wrongly), and that was all that concerned him. Banks lived day to day, so to speak, but he also thought that his work in Louisiana guaranteed him immortal fame. "History" would record his deeds. He was conscious of history. He was thinking about what would be said of his Louisiana government in the long run, but he had no long-range plan. Why not?

It is impossible to tell for certain, but a look at the general's career before the Louisiana experiment offers at least one enticing clue. General Banks's first command was the Department of Annapolis. There, in 1861, he controlled the corridor from the Northern states to Washington, D.C. His headquarters was in Baltimore, and Banks "found the situation one of Southern hearts and Northern muskets," as his able biographer, Fred

Harvey Harrington, states. He tried to be conciliatory first, and secession sentiment soared. He was ordered to get tougher. Eventually, Banks's soldiers installed a pro-Union successor to the notoriously secessionist police marshal.

Banks then became the head of the Army of the Shenandoah, and more of Maryland came under his jurisdiction. On George B. McClellan's orders, he arrested secessionist members of the Maryland legislature on their way to Frederick for a special session. His soldiers "protected" the polls, as pro-Union forces swept to victory in the autumn elections.

In later years, Banks would boast that his administration of Maryland was a model for Reconstruction:

The secession leaders — the enemies of the people — were replaced and loyal men assigned to . . . their duties. This made Maryland a loyal State. . . . What occurred there will occur in North Carolina, in South Carolina, in Georgia, in Alabama and Mississippi. If . . . those States shall be controlled by men that are loyal . . . we shall then have loyal populations and loyal governments.

The Maryland experience helps to explain Banks's optimism.

As was more often the case than has been commonly recognized in the study of Reconstruction, such optimism was rooted in a particular analysis of Southern society. The analysis perhaps came easier to former Democrats (like Banks), who were used to invoking a form of class analysis in their prescriptions for political policy. It may have come easier as well to a politician of working class origins (like Banks, the "Bobbin Boy of Massachusetts"). Banks vowed to build a loyal Louisiana out of the "humble and honest farmer, the poor mechanic, the hard-

working classes, the bone and sinew of the land." It will not do to dismiss such statements as the rhetorical litany of American politicians. Banks had blamed secession on a tiny elite of rich planters and a Southern urban aristocracy. He thought that a "clear majority of the people were . . . opposed to the war and could you remove from the control of public opinion one or two thousand in each of these States . . . you would have a population in all of these States . . . loyal and true to the Government."

General Banks may have been inept, but his miscalculations were born of practical experience in Maryland and of assumptions about the social composition of Southern society. His conceit stemmed from memories of his role in one of the North's two big political successes early in the war, the retention of Maryland in the Union. His obstinacy in pursuing his political plan was rooted in a fairly systematic political philosophy which told him what Southern society was like. The deeper roots of the ineptitude, conceit, and obstinacy of the other characters in the Louisiana experiment likewise demand study.

There are limits to what any one historian can do. Mrs. Cox has done more than most. One need only think of the muddled state of scholarship on early Louisiana Reconstruction before her work — and that of McCrary and other recent scholars as well — to be grateful for the modern accomplishments in this field.

On February 10, 1982, the Civil War Round Table of New York City gave LaWanda Cox the Baroness/Lincoln Award for *Lincoln and Black Freedom*. She deserved it. Her book is a contribution to Lincoln scholarship that will last.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

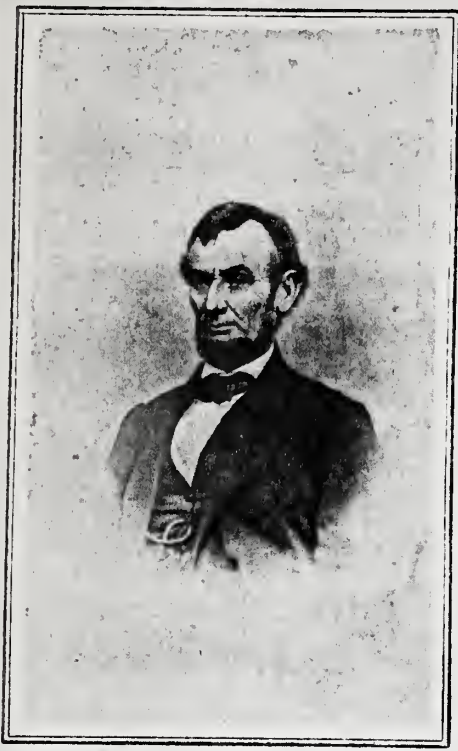
FIGURE 4. A photographer in New Orleans, E. Jacobs, took a picture of Banks and his staff in the spring of 1864. This woodcut was copied from it.

The Union
Jan. 1992

Senate Chamber
Washington, D.C.
Dec 8 1864

Miss Sallie A. Overton
Fredericks Hall
Louisa Co., Va.
D. Miss

At the request of your mother-in-law Mrs. Grant Green and your brother Frederick Overton, I have procured from the President a pass for you and your sisters and brother to pass the Federal lines and go to Henderson, Kentucky - I send the pass enclosed herewith - Mrs. Green and your brother request me to request you when you return to telegraph them at Henderson, Ky., and they would join you there - your friends at Henderson are well - I send this by Fortess Monroe (flag of truce) and hope it may reach you safely - I have the honor to be
Yours etc
A. Lincoln



Allow these sisters and brother, Sallie, Juliana, Eliza and Dabney Overton to pass our lines and go to their relative, Grant Green, Esq., at Henderson, Ky.
Dec. 7, 1864
A. Lincoln

At the request of your mother-in-law Mrs. Grant Green and your brother Frederick Overton, I have procured from the President a pass for you and your sisters and brother to pass the Federal lines and go to Henderson, Kentucky - I send the pass enclosed herewith - Mrs. Green and your brother request me to request you when you return to telegraph them at Henderson, Ky., and they would join you there - your friends at Henderson are well - I send this by Fortess Monroe (flag of truce) and hope it may reach you safely - I have the honor to be
Yours etc
A. Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln's Pass for Confederate Orphans to go to Kentucky

Sent to Them by Kentucky Senator L. W. Powell by Flag of Truce

38 Abraham Lincoln - small ALS 'pass,' all in his hand, Washington, DC, Dec. 7, 1864, to the Overton children, Fredericks Hall, Va. (Confederate States), accompanied by the original letter of transmittal to the children by Kentucky Senator L. W. Powell, headed 'Senate Chamber,' in which he advises them that he has met with Pres. Lincoln and procured this pass for them which he is enclosing and sending by Flag of Truce to them. Lincoln wrote very few letters addressed into the Confederacy, an historical and compassionate item. Perhaps Lincoln made this exception because he was born in Kentucky and his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, was from Kentucky as well. Possibly thoughts of his son's recent death also had something to do with his interest in these orphaned children, trying to make their way to the safety of their relatives in the North.

'Allow these sisters and brother, Sallie, Juliana, Eliza and Dabney Overton to pass our lines and go to their relative, Grant Green, Esq., at Henderson, Ky. Dec. 7, 1864 - A. Lincoln.'

Accompanied by the original letter of transmittal by Kentucky Senator and Governor L. W. Powell to Miss Sallie Overton, Fredericks Hall, Louisa Co., Va., headed 'Senate Chamber,' Washington, DC, Dec. 8, 1864, with adherence at top where Sen. Powell attached Pres. Lincoln's pass to this letter, as follows:

'Dear Miss - At the request of your mother-in-law, Mrs. Grant Green, and your brother, Frederick Overton - I have procured from the President a Pass for you and your sisters and brother to pass the Federal lines and go to Henderson, Kentucky - I send the pass enclosed herewith. Mrs. Green and your brother request when you reach Baltimore to telegraph them at Henderson, Ky., and they would join you there - your friends at Henderson are well - I send this by Fortess Monroe (flag of truce) and hope it may reach you safely, etc. - L. W. Powell.'

An intriguing and compassionate correspondence of President Lincoln and Senator Powell assisting these young children reunite with their families in the North. The pass, written by Lincoln, has been endorsed by a Union officer when the children passed into Federal lines on March 9, 1865, as follows: 'Rec'd Vienna, Va., March 9, 1865 - Jno. E. Williford, Lt. Col. and US agent for exchange.' A marvelous piece of Civil War history and a unique Lincoln item. Superb (2) 9,500.

92

Confederate's skull finally to be buried

Associated Press

NEW CASTLE - "Rebel Butler" spent 70 years in a dusty display case at the Henry County Historical Society, an ignominious end for a Confederate soldier who gave his life in the Civil War's Battle of Spotsylvania.

But 132 years after that battle, Butler is finally getting a military funeral planned for Aug. 24 at the Confederate Cemetery in Spotsylvania, Va.

"It's still a mystery who he was, but he'll be buried right with other soldiers killed in the same battle," said Wayne Retter, a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Records indicate that George W. Burke, an assistant surgeon with the 46th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, removed the skull from the battlefield a year after the battle.

FwJG 8-14-96

Confederacy's Last Widow Dances Into Fame

By ADAM NOSSITER

ELBA, Ala., Oct. 2 — At the end of a narrow rural lane, in a place where only chirping birds break the silence, a last fragile link to the distant American Armageddon struggled with her memory.

"No, no," the elderly woman said quietly. "He never did talk about any war." She paused for a moment, and a faint recollection surfaced after seven decades: a story of fording streams. "Only thing," the woman, Alberta Martin, recalled, "I heard him say several times, the men would lay down logs and things, over a creek, you know — to keep from slipping in the water."

More than 130 years after the last shot was fired, the Civil War of William Jasper Martin, Fourth Alabama Infantry, Company K, comes down to that — a half-remembered anecdote about what must have been a minor aspect of the teen-age recruit's battlefield experiences. That is all his widow can manage. "He never did talk about it," Mrs. Martin said.

She was only 21 on a cold day in December 1927, when she became the third wife of the 81-year-old veteran with a quick temper, a bushy mustache and a hefty war pension.

Today she is believed to be the last surviving Confederate widow, according to organizations that commemorate the Confederacy. Just six weeks ago, startled Alabama officials, certain that the state's last Confederate widow died in 1986, awarded Mrs. Martin a pension after a public campaign, including news-



Lee Celano for The New York Times

Alabama has awarded a pension to Alberta Martin, 89, after recognizing her as the widow of a Confederate soldier. She sat in her home in Elba.

Continued on Page A13, Column 2

NYT 1996

Confederacy's Last Widow, a Dance With Southern Fame

Continued From Page A1

paper articles, put her in the spotlight.

The organizations that have helped authenticate her status — the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy — hold Mrs. Martin in awe. That status bemuses the practical-minded tenant farmer's daughter, after 89 tough years of living poor in rural southern Alabama.

The Lost Cause is represented in her tiny linoleum-floored living room by a miniature Confederate flag, the kind often seen next to the cash register at Southern diners, and by a portrait — still wrapped in plastic — of Robert E. Lee, who led the Army of Northern Virginia in which her husband served. Mrs. Martin's memory of meals missed during what she calls "the Hoover times" is far sharper than any of her husband's war stories.

This celebrity over something she never stopped much to think about is unexpected, and relatively recent. Mrs. Martin was briefly in the news in October 1990, when it was widely reported that a death in a South Carolina nursing home amounted to the demise of Confederate widowhood. After protesting to Alabama reporters that she was still around, Mrs. Martin faded back into obscurity.

But some locals remembered her, and in May a new member of the

Sons of Confederate Veterans, Dr. Kenneth Chancey, a dentist, paid her a visit, saw that she lived without air-conditioning and resolved to secure a pension for her as a Confederate widow. Alabama officials thought they had long ago dispensed with that obligation.

Still, the bureaucrats in Montgomery, the state capital often called the "cradle of the Confederacy," were happy to oblige. They will not disclose the amount of Mrs. Martin's pension, but Dr. Chancey praised the officials for their fairness in granting an increase over the last level established for Confederate widows' pensions, which was about \$350 a month.

When her bid for a pension became known, the Alabama Senate officially decreed it "a true joy" to recognize her as "the last surviving widow of a Confederate veteran," and in August Dr. Chancey brought her to Richmond for the centennial meeting of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

There was a five-minute standing ovation when she entered the ballroom, Dr. Chancey recalls. "These guys just couldn't get over this," he said. "People were crying. These men were weeping. The women were, too."

In a region where political careers can still be damaged over insufficient allegiance to the Confederate battle flag, the symbolic import of Mrs. Martin's existence is stunning to the Confederacy's nostalgic sons and daughters.

Just as remarkable, Mrs. Martin is

the mother of what members of the Confederate groups reverently refer to as a "real son" — the son of a Confederate soldier. William Jasper Martin fathered a son in his long-ago marriage to the woman who was 60 years younger than he. Their son, William Oren Martin, is now 68.

"She is a living link to the Confederacy," Ronald T. Clemons, executive director of the Sons of Confeder-

ate Veterans, said of Mrs. Martin. Still, back in her neatly painted frame house, with orange tiger lilies brightly framing the walkway, the white-haired woman in the pretty housecoat is unlikely to be caught singing "Dixie."

Her memory of war stories has faded, but a region's hasn't.

ate Veterans, said of Mrs. Martin.

Unlike the garrulous heroine of the best-selling novel by Allan Gurganus, "Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All," Mrs. Martin is chary with her memories, just like the ancient soldier she married so long ago.

(Her son, vaguely aware of the novel, at least in its television manifestation, is also resentful. "They

never consulted us," Mr. Martin said. "I think somebody owes somebody an apology.")

Today, all Mrs. Martin has of the soldier who survived the bloody, 10-month struggle for Petersburg, Va., in 1864-65 is a torn, sepia-toned photograph framed on the wall. A trim, mustachioed man, perhaps in his early 70's, stares at the camera, sitting cross-legged and impassive. Next to him is his second wife.

Sentiment played no part in his third wife's marriage to him. Already a widow at 21, a veteran of a dusty cotton mill, Alberta simply "got tired of living amongst my half-brothers," she remembers, fed up with waiting on them and cleaning for them.

The courtship was minimal. She had seen him playing dominoes outside the little store above their house in the nearby city of Opp, in south-central Alabama.

"We talked a little over the fence," she recalled. Besides, "the old man drew about \$50 a month — and you know, that was big money back then."

The new couple was serenaded with cowbells and horns on their wedding night. Afterwards, Mrs. Martin said, "we rented a little old plank house." Tenderness plays little part in her recollection of the years that followed. "He had a temper on him that wouldn't wait," she said.

It was a jealous temper, suspicious of other men who might want to pass the time of day with his young wife.

"He didn't want nobody messing with me," Mrs. Martin recalled.

A troubling memory resurfaces: the night of a village gathering, a "boxed supper" to raise money for the church. Men were bidding on the box that the young woman had brought; whoever bid the most had the privilege of sharing supper with her.

The old soldier put a stop to it. "He didn't like that," she recalled. "He told them to put it down."

His service to the Confederacy framed their marriage, from the pension that drew her to him to the veterans' meeting in Montgomery in July 1932 that hastened his demise. He got sick during the get-together, Mrs. Martin recalled, "and they brought him home. He died eight days later."

Within a few months she had married again, to William Jasper Martin's teen-age grandson Charlie. "Mr. Martin hated Charlie Martin because he drank," she recalled. The two were happily married for a half-century up until Charlie's death in 1983. The family's connection to the Confederacy was all but forgotten.

After all the years of indifference to it, she says her new celebrity status has hardly changed her life. "It hasn't made no difference to me," Mrs. Martin said. "People will shun you because they are jealous."

Her son said, "They reckon she gets money out of the deal." And she added, "You could always use some money."

awarded Mrs. Martin a pension after a public campaign, including news-

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Alabama has awarded a pension to Alberta Martin, 89, after recognizing her as the widow of a Confederate soldier. She sat in her home in Elba.

Lee Colano for THE NEW YORK TIMES

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